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Exposition of the ninth  
chapter  
of the Epistle to the Romans  
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EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
NINTH CHAPTER OF ROMANS.

“THE Ninth Chapter of Romans, rightly understood, is, to pious minds, sweetest consolation.”—*Loci Com. Theol. de Predestinatione.*

“COME, then, thou solemn power, Philology, pioneer of the abstruser sciences, to prepare the way for their passage, . . . lend me thy needle-pointed pencil, that I may trace out the hair-breadth differences of language.”—ABRAHAM TUCKER. (*The Light of Nature Pursued*, chap. xxvi. vol. ii. p. 268, edit. 1831.)

EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
NINTH CHAPTER  
OF THE  
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY  
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MONOGRAPHS ON ROMANS III. AND VI., AND OF COMMENTARIES ON THE  
GOSPELS OF ST. MATTHEW AND ST. MARK, ETC.

*A NEW EDITION, RE-WRITTEN, TO WHICH IS ADDED AN  
EXPOSITION OF THE TENTH CHAPTER.*

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“ALAS for thee, Jerusalem! How cold thy heart to Me!  
How often in these arms of love would I have gathered thee!  
My sheltering wing had been thy shield, My love thy happy lot  
I would it had been thus with thee! I would, but ye would not.”

“That hour has fled, those tears are told, the agony is past;  
The Lord has wept, the Lord has bled, but He has not loved—His last.  
From heaven His eye is downward bent, still ranging to and fro,  
Where'er, in this wide wilderness, there roams a child of woe.  
Nor His alone; the Three-in-One, who looked through Jesus' eye,  
Could still the harps of angel-bands, to hear the suppliant's sigh:  
And, when the rebel chooses wrath, God wails his hapless lot,  
Deep-breathing from His heart of love,—‘I would, but ye would not.’”

GUTHRIE. (*The Redeemer's Tears.*)

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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THE first edition of this monograph appeared in 1849 in the form of *Lectures*. These were delivered, first of all, to the people of my pastoral charge, and afterwards to the students of my exegetical class, who subjected the interpretations propounded to that peculiar *running of the gauntlet* that is called in Scotland “heckling.”

The *Lectures* were also delivered in Glasgow; and at the conclusion of the course I was warmly requested to publish my *Exposition*,—the whole immense assembly rising to their feet to express, by acclamation, the heartiness of their desire.

At length the book was published and speedily disposed of.

Thenceforward there have been frequent applications for a new edition,—applications to which I have had a desire to accede, but numerous other engagements laid their hands retardingly upon me for years and years.

Now however, being in the enjoyment of comparative leisure, I have re-written the *Exposition* throughout, entirely remodelling its form. The

first edition was composed in stormy times, and, being myself in the midst of the commotion, I felt that necessity was laid upon me to meet defiance with earnest defence. Hence the strong polemical tone that pervaded the book.

Happily a different atmosphere of influence surrounds me now; so that I am able to lay down the sword, and take up the sickle.

Instead therefore of retaining the form of distinct *Lectures*, so suitable and convenient in polemical discourse, I have, in re-writing my *Exposition*, carried forward the interpretation in continuity, everywhere substituting scientific and scientifically practical exegesis in place of controversial discussion.

May the book convey in its bosom a blessing to such minds and hearts as have been in theological perplexity!

GLASGOW,

*April*, 1888.



## INTRODUCTORY.

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“I THINK,” says Coleridge in his *Table Talk*, “St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans the most profound work in existence.” It was fitted and predestined, because of its extraordinary acumen and deep spiritual insight, to influence a long succession of the ages. It is indeed unique as a letter. There is nothing like it in the entire domain of epistolary literature. It stands alone, towering aloft.

The apostle was a stranger to most of his Roman brethren. He had not enjoyed the opportunity of witnessing their demeanour in their meetings and in their homes. Hence the large amount of impersonal discussion throughout the missive. His subject shapes itself, as he handles it, into dissertation and debate. It wears the aspect of a grand doctrinal manifesto; and, as such, it would have been entirely inadequate for his purpose, had he failed to bring into view the very peculiar and intimate relationship of his Hebrew brethren to the incarnated and therefore the historical Messiah, “the Christ of history.”

The Hebrews had been for ages the messianic

people. It was among them, as distinguished from all other peoples, that the chief moral preparation for the coming of the great Deliverer had taken shape. The prophets, who blew the trumpet of the advent, and sought to make the rough places smooth, and the crooked places straight, were Hebrews. The Messiah Himself, when He did make His appearance in our world, and in our nature, was a Hebrew, with all the narrow and distorted Hebraisms dropt out. The volume of the book was composed in Hebrew. The first preachers of the gospel, the apostles, were Hebrews. Paul himself was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews." It would have been a flaw by default in his manifesto, had he ignored his countrymen, and said nothing about their relation to the gospel.

The apostle was too logical by far, and likewise too broad in his spirit, to leave behind him so vast a gap in his great doctrinal manifesto. And hence the device of his *dissertation concerning the Hebrews*, a species of *minor manifesto* regarding his countrymen, a manifesto that spread itself out over Judaism, and comprehended in unity chapters ix. x. and xi.

In chapter ix. the apostle opens his subject in a profoundly pathetic spirit. He shows, with great power of demonstration, that God has the sovereign right to confer His messianic favours upon whomsoever He pleases. God has liberty

in relation to men. His hands were not tied by Judaism. As regards human organs of Divine communications, He was not restricted to the Hebrews. Far less was it the case that the Hebrews, when disloyal to the aim and ideal of their messianic relationship, and its peculiar institutions, could yet be entitled to special spiritual prerogatives, and a monopoly of the very highest messianic favours.

In chapter x. the apostle shows that the greatest messianic blessings are still, though not monopolisingly, available to his countrymen. They are as really available to them as to the most favoured of the Gentiles.

In chapter xi. the apostle shows that the time is on the wing when his recreant countrymen will reconsider their ways, and their duty to the Saviour and to God. They will be grafted in again, and, shooting aloft, will take the lead among their fellow men. So that if their fall and dispersion have been over-ruled to the enrichment of the world, and their loss has contributed to the gain of the Gentiles, how much more shall the fulness of both Jews and Gentiles be for the elevation and enduring weal of the human race at large! There will indeed be no necessitation of will, and no dislocation of the broad foundation-stones of moral accountability and character. But the power of the most powerful of motives will be unceasingly and increas-

ingly wielded on and for all men everywhere, and by God Himself, until the earth be a new earth and a clean earth, fit palace and home for the now exalted Redeemer and all His loyal people.

To revert to chapter ix. It is a marvellous piece of reasoning; and strikes out so vigorously, yet so picturesquely, against the spiritual assumption of his countrymen, and in vindication of the sovereign liberty of God to confer His national and personal favours and privileges as He Himself pleases, that every student of theology, and every minister of the gospel, and indeed every intelligent reader of the Scriptures, must feel constrained to make, sooner or later, and perhaps repeatedly, a special and serious effort to trace the consecutive steps and stages of the great logician's argument. To that class of thinkers in particular I submit my *Exposition*.

As to the import and importance of the ninth chapter, a somewhat vivid idea may be formed from an occurrence that transpired in the celebrated Synod of Dort, in the year 1618.

Augustus Toplady, author of the hymn, "Rock of ages, cleft for me," and of some other productions by no means so creditable to him, says of the synod referred to, that "it formed a constellation of the best and most learned theologians that had ever met in council since the dispersion of the apostles; unless we except the

imperial convocation at Nice, in the fourth century." (*Historic Proof*, section xix.) "Doubt if you can," adds he exaggeratingly, "whether the sun could shine on a living collection of more exalted piety and stupendous erudition."

In this synod, Dr. Joseph Hall, Dean of Worcester—but afterwards Bishop of Exeter, and finally of Norwich—one of the five British deputies appointed by King James to take part in the synod's proceedings, preached the first sermon that was delivered before the assembled brethren. It was, says "the memorable John Hales of Eton," "a polite and pathological Latin sermon," in the course of which he set himself to reprove the curious disputes which that age had made concerning predestination." "For the ending of these disputes," continues Mr. Hales, "his advice to the synod was, that both parts contending should well consider of St. Paul's discourse in the ninth to the Romans, and for their final determination, both should exhibit to the synod a plain, perspicuous, and familiar paraphrase on that chapter. *For if the meaning of that discourse,*" said Dr. Hall, "*were once perfectly opened, the question were at an end.*" (*Letters*, p. 382, ed. 1688.)

Doubtless the doctrinal weight of the epistle must, in every biblical system, be great; and it would be in vain to ignore the transcendent power and raciness of the discussion.

It is worthy of note that the triplet of chapters ix. x. xi. forms a remarkably distinct section of the epistle, and is abruptly introduced, on the one hand, and almost as abruptly terminated, on the other. So far as ostensible literary connexion is concerned, there are no interlacings between the conclusion of the eighth chapter and the commencement of the ninth. "The new section," says Meyer, "is introduced with a fervent outburst of Israelitish patriotism, but with no connexion with what goes before."

## SPECIAL LITERATURE ON ROMANS IX.

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(1) Jacobus Arminius: *Analysis Brevis Noni Capitis Epistolæ Pauli ad Romanos*. (Pp. 778-800 of his *Opera*, Lugd. Bat. ed. 1629.) A kind of epoch-making book, but not satisfactory in an exegetical point of view. When Arminius went to Geneva to finish his theological education, he found Beza lecturing on *Romans ix*. He was charmed with the venerable exegete, and drained to its very dregs his supralapsarian theology. When he returned to Holland and commenced his ministry in Amsterdam in the year 1588, he forthwith began to expound the Epistle to the Romans. Very soon was his attention turned specifically to *Romans ix*. He was urged by some of his brethren to refute the views of Koornhert, *views of conditional election*. By others he was urged to refute the views of those who had, as was alleged, insufficiently refuted Koornhert's views. These disputants, it seems, had dealt with Koornhert's notions from a sublapsarian point of view. Professor Martin Lydius appealed to Arminius to defend the supralapsarianism of his great Genevan teacher. Arminius complied with both requests, nothing doubting that he would be able to demolish Koornhert, on the one hand, and the sublapsarians, on the other. He was honest. He carried on his researches, although he was getting progressively conscious that his foundations were giving way underneath him. He felt constrained at length to let



supralapsarianism go. He took refuge for a season in sublapsarianism. But that too he was constrained ere long to let go; and he found himself by-and-by in the very standpoint that had been occupied by Koornhert.

(2) Along with the *Analysis* of Arminius should be taken the *Analytica Explicatio* of his great but choleric antagonist, *Francis Gomarus*. (*Opera*, Pars Secunda, pp. 49-63). He was a conspicuous figure in the Synod of Dort; and, along with Sibrandus, kept the assembly in a state of chronic irritation. He contended that "Episcopius falsified the tenet of reprobation, no one ever teaching that God absolutely decreed to cast any away without sin; but as He decreed the end, so He decreed the means; that is, as He predestinated man to death, so He predestinated him to sin, the only way to death." "So," says Mr. Hales, "he mended the question, as tinkers mend kettles, and made it worse than it was before." (*Letters from the Synod of Dort*, p. 435, ed. 1688.)

(3) Jodocus Larenus: *Responsio ad Analysin Jacobi Arminii in ix. Cap. ad Rom., qua ostenditur breviter ac perspicue dictam Analysin mentem Apostoli improbe pervertere*. 1616. The author was almost as eager as Gomarus himself for the dialectic fray. He was flip-pant however, and spoke of Arminius as "homuncio."

(4) Sebastian Castellio: *Annotationes in Caput Nonum ad Romanos, quibus materia Electionis et Prædestinationis amplius Illustratur*. 1613. It was originally published as a long note in his *Biblia Latina*, which was completed at Basle in 1550. The Note is of slight value; but the man was interesting. His proper name, as he was careful to explain in his *Defensio*, was not *Castalio*, but *Castellio*. His French name was *Chateillon*.

(5) Gellius Snecanus: *Isagoge in Nonum Caput*



*Epistolæ Pauli ad Romanos, dilucidam partium dispositionem atque methodicum argumentorum ordinem, necnon fundamenta probationum uniuscujusque versus breviter comprehendens : ut propriam Spiritus Sancti mentem quivis commode et recte ex sua ipsius collatione et antecedentium et consequentium scopo intelligere queat : una cum præcipuarum dissentientium objectionum refutatione, et fallaciarum, absurditatumque demonstratione.* Anno 1596. Gerard Brandt, the historian, says of Gellius that he was an "ancient, learned, and godly man." His theology ran in the grooves of Melancthon's. The tone of the book is manly. But he had to suffer for conscience' sake. He published in 1591 another book, constructed on the same lines as his *Isagoge to Romans ix.*

(6) Adrian van den Borre: *Explicatio Dilucida Capitis Noni ad Romanos, in qua solide et perspicue demonstratur, illud ipsum, firmandæ absolutæ prædestinationi, qualem Contra-Remonstrantes urgent, minime facere.* ("Acta et Scripta Synodalia Dordracena Ministrorum Remonstrantium." Pp. 96-192.) 1620.

(7) Samuel Loveday: *The Hatred of Esau, and the Love of Jacob unfoulded; being a brief and plain Exposition of the 9. Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romanes, being the heads of what was delivered in several discourses, both publick and private.* By Samuel Loveday, servant of the Church of Christ. 1650. This Samuel Loveday is not to be confounded with the author of *Personal Reprobation Reprobated*. His exposition is meagre.

(8) Justus Feurbornius: *Sacra Disquisitio de Capite Epistolæ S. Apostoli Pauli ad Romanos nono.* 1652.

(9) Edward Elton: *The Great Mystery of Godliness: being an Exposition upon the whole ninth Chapter of Romans.* 1653.

(10) John Goodwin: *An Exposition of the Nineth*

*Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; wherein by the tenour and carriage of the contents of the said chapter, from first to last, is plainly shewed and proved, that the Apostle's scope therein, is to assert and maintain his great doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, and that here he discourseth nothing at all concerning any personal ELECTION or REPROBATION of men from eternity.*

1653. An able production, but cast in the mould of the typical principles which form the exegetical basis of the *Commentaries* of Gellius and Borre, and of the *Analysis* of Arminius. It is not to be expected therefore, that the author could be successful in his exegesis. Nevertheless his *Exposition* is characterised by features of extraordinary excellence. It does not excel, if it equal, the *Lucid Explication* of Borre in methodical arrangement, and logical precision, and rhetorical concinnity; but, as grouping together masses of learning, and episodes of racy reasoning, and pithy observations, it stands without a rival. The personality of the man was noble, and the intertwining, for a season, of his fate with that of Milton vibrates into pathos.

(11) Samuel Loveday (jun.): *Personal Reprobation Reprobated: Being a plain Exposition upon the Nineth Chapter of the Romans, shewing that there is neither little nor much of any such doctrine as Personal Election or Reprobation, asserted by the Apostle in that Chapter: but that his great designe is to maintain Justification by Faith in Christ Jesus, without the works of the Law. Humbly offered to serious consideration, by Samuel Loveday.* London, 1676. Not to be confounded with the author of *The Hatred of Esau, and the Love of Jacob unfoulded*. This exposition is a plagiarised echo to the unlearned of John Goodwin's.

(12) Christoph. Matthæus Pfaff: *Commentatio Succincta in Caput ix. Epistolæ ad Romanos.* 1726.

(13) J. Fawcett: *A Critical Exposition of the Ninth*

*Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, as far as is supposed to relate to the doctrine of Predestination.* 1752.

(14) Pierre Yver: *Sermons sur le Chapitre ix. de L'Epître de st. Paul aux Romains.* 1765. Excellent specimens of expository sermons. The author was pastor of the French church in Paramaribo, Surinam.

(15) Jo. August. Nösselt: *Interpretatio Grammatica capituli viiii. Epistolæ Pauli ad Romanos.* 1765. This exposition, though claimed by Nösselt in the 1765 edition ("auctore Jo. Aug. Nösselt"), is yet claimed by Jütting in the 1761 edition ("auctore W. Gottlieb Jütting"), and, as such, it is dedicated to his friends.

(16) J. Jarrom: *Discourses Explanatory and Practical on the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.* 1827 and 1835.

(17) D. Joh. Christian Fried. Steudel: *Nachweisung der in Röm. c. 9, liegenden Sätze als zu Gunsten eines unbedingten Rathschlusses Gottes nicht deutbarer.* (Pp. 1-95 of the *Tübinger Zeitschrift für Theologie*; Jahrgang, 1836, Erstes Heft.)

(18) J. T. Beck: *Versuch einer pneumatisch hermeneutischen Entwicklung des neunten Kapitels im Briefe an die Römer.* 1833. (Along with this monograph Beck's posthumous *University Lectures on Romans*, edited by Lindenmeyer, should be consulted. 1884.)

Besides these monographs on the whole chapter, there are many interesting dissertations and treatises more limited in their scope, dealing with only individual statements or expressions or verses. The picturesque style of the apostle's composition gives ready occasion for special consideration of special points. Gleams of genius in the setting of the Divine ideas settle into a saliency that has been for centuries charming to millions of scholarly Christians, and that

will no doubt continue to entrance millions more for centuries and millenniums to come.

Intermediate between monographs on the entire chapter, and smaller treatises on single expressions or sentences, there are interesting monographs on the entire triplet of chapters ix. x. xi. such as the following: (1) Jo. Peter Siegmund Winckler: *Versuchte Auflösung schwerer Zweifels-Knoten in Pauli Epistel an die Römer, durch eine an einander hangende Erklärung des ix. x. xi. Capitels.* 1735. (2) C. A. Langguth: *Confutatio Universalismi et particularismi Judaici Paulina Rom. ix. x. xi.* 1812. (3) D. Willibald Beyschlag: *Die Paulinische Théodicée Römer ix.-xi. Ein Beitrag zur biblischen Theologie.* 1868.

## EXPOSITION OF ROMANS IX.

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THE apostle, when about to launch into the great theme of this chapter, was conscious of a peculiar burden of solemnity lying on his heart.

Hence the two emphatic asseverations contained in the first verse. (1) *I say "truth" in Christ*, and (2), *I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit*.

Instead of the somewhat indefinite expression *I say "truth,"* the more definite phrase *I say "the truth"* might be employed. It is the translation of Tyndale. It was Luther's before him, and Coverdale's after him. It has its place in our public English version of 1611; and it is retained in the Revised Version. The Rheims Version corresponds Latinisingly,—*I speake "the" verity*. There is no objection to the insertion of the article, except on the score that it is not present in the apostle's Greek. The two representations, the definite and the indefinite, are but the obverse and the reverse of one reality. They were lying, and with almost equal claims, before the apostle for his option: but he chose

the indefinite *I say* “*what is true*” (*when I say that I have great grief and continual sorrow in my heart*). Wycliffe retained the indefinite translation,—*I seye treuthe*. So did Calvin, *Je di vérité*. The late Dutch translators abide by the same literality, *Ik spreek waarheid*.

These Dutch translators use—it will be observed—the verb *spreek*, corresponding to our English *speak*, instead of *zegge*, corresponding to our English *say*. The Rheims Version too has *speake*. But *say* is the better translation. *I say truth* is better adapted than *I speak truth* to bridge the attention over to the statement in verse second, to which the apostle wishes to give emphasis. The word *say*, as distinguished from *speak*, directs attention rather to *the thing uttered* than to its *utterance*. In his first translation, that of 1829, Meyer had *truth I speak* (*Wahrheit rede ich*); but in all his subsequent editions he wisely substituted *say* for *speak*.

The peculiar collocation of the words is noteworthy, *truth I say*. It is especially noteworthy in connexion with the succeeding phrase *in Christ*. This phrase is not to be connected with the noun *truth*, as if the whole expression were, *I say truth as it is in Christ*. Origen’s ingenuity imposed upon him when, assuming that the expression “seemed to show that there is some truth which is not *in Christ*,” he proceeded to establish, by instances, such a distinction of



truths. The apostle, assuredly, is simply referring to the statement which he is about to make in verse second; and he does not take into consideration whether that statement is *a truth in Christ*, or some other denomination of truth. Enough for him that it is *truth*. The phrase *in Christ* is to be grammatically connected, not with the noun *truth*, but with the verb *I say*.

It was for long a favourite opinion of interpreters that this phrase *in Christ* is the formula of an oath, and should be rendered *by Christ*. Küttner even supposes that the words *I say truth* simply mean *I swear*. Abelard paraphrases the apostle's statement thus,—“Swearing by Jesus Christ, I truthfully say.” Lombard, another of the great schoolmen, takes the same view. So does Thomas Aquinas; Calvin also, and Hemming, Este, Grotius, Day, and many others of the older expositors. In more recent times, the same interpretation has received the support of Cramer, Nösselt, Flatt, Terrot, Burton, Reiche, Köllner, Schrader; but it is not approved of by the most recent expositors. Piscator among the older interpreters, and Schrader among the more recent, have introduced the interpretation into their respective German versions (*bei Christo*). So did Theophilo, long before, in his Italian version (*per Christo*). But it is a wrong translation and interpretation. Not decisively so, indeed, because of the unfitness of the pre-

position ( $\epsilon\nu = \text{I}$ , see Matt. v. 34-36, Gen. xxxi. 53, Deut. vi. 13, etc.); but because, in the first place, a simpler interpretation is at hand; while in the second place, we never find any of the apostles taking an oath *by Christ*. When they took an oath, they swore *by God*. (See Rom. i. 9; 2 Cor. i. 23, xi. 31; Phil. i. 8.) And then moreover, if we were to interpret the expression as the formula of an oath, consistency would constrain us—as it constrained Cramer, Mace, Nösselt, Flatt, Reiche, Köllner, Schrader—to interpret the corresponding expression *in the Holy Spirit*, at the close of the verse, as a similar formula, *I swear by the Holy Spirit*. But such an oath would be inconsistent with usage. And to suppose that the apostle should, within the compass of one short verse, employ two distinct oaths, taking them moreover in a way that excluded the only Divine One, in the name of whom oaths were wont to be made, confounds our sense of propriety.

The phrase *in Christ* was one of the apostle's favourite expressions. All Christians, according to him, are *in Christ*. They have been “baptized *into Christ*” (Rom. vi. 3)—that is to say, they have been united to Christ by the baptism of the Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13),—so that they are *in Christ*, as if they were parts of His person, members of His body. When the apostle thinks of this union, he sometimes allows the relations of time



past and time future to interpenetrate, so that to his eye believers have not only been *crucified with Christ* (Gal. ii. 20), and *buried with Him* (Rom. vi. 4), but also *raised with Him* (Col. ii. 12, iii. 1), and *glorified with Him in heavenly places* (Eph. ii. 6). Christians "have their Christian being" *in Christ*. They "live and move" *in Christ*. They are "justified" *in Christ*. (Gal. ii. 17.) They are "sanctified" *in Christ*. (1 Cor. i. 2.) They "triumph" *in Christ*. (2 Cor. ii. 14.) They "speak" *in Christ*. (2 Cor. ii. 17, xii. 19.) And here the apostle says that "he says truth" *in Christ*. The personality of Christ had, to his transfiguring conception, become *the sphere of his spiritual being and activity*, so that what he did, in the express consciousness of his Christian state, he did *in the realized presence of Christ*, and thus all the nobler elements of his spiritual being were intensified and exalted. In such a mood, how could he stoop to wilful misrepresentation? There were the amplest guarantees for the truthfulness of what he was about to aver. Realizing that he was, so to speak, "interned" in Christ, he felt that in his ethical acts he was dominated by the power that ensphered him.

"*I lie not,*" *I am uttering no falsehood*. It is the reverse representation of that which, in the preceding expression, is represented in obverse. It lends intensification to the affirmation. (Com-

pare 1 Tim. ii. 7, and also 1 Sam. iii. 18.) It reminds us of John the evangelist's phraseology in reference to John the Baptist, "He confessed, and denied not, but confessed." (John i. 20.) The apostle was most desirous that his real feelings in reference to his countrymen should be understood. Whatever they themselves might think of him, he was everything the reverse of their enemy, or of being alien to them in spirit. He was patriotic to the core, although not blindly so, or in a way that would be inconsistent, either with the claims of a wider and loftier philanthropy, or with the loyalty which he owed to the Lord of all.

— "*My conscience bearing witness with me*" (συμμαρτυρούσης μοι τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου). These words may be regarded as attesting, either the immediately preceding negation, *I am not lying*, or the whole complex asseveration, *I am saying truth in Christ, I am not lying*. This latter interpretation is the view contended for by Philippi and Van Hangel among others, and it is put in a somewhat exaggerated form by Hofmann, when he represents the participial clause as referring "not so much to the merely interjected negation *I am not lying*, as to the primary affirmation *I am speaking truth*." But, by a kind of exegetical instinct, the former interpretation has been generally assumed. With good reason, inasmuch as the whole verse, in virtue of the "self-con-

tained or absolute" nature of the expression *I lie not*, divides itself naturally into a species of irregular parallelism.

*I say truth in Christ.*

*I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit.*

It would have been different had the apostle chosen to *tie*—as both Luther and Tyndale have done for him—his positive and negative assertions, *I say truth in Christ*, "*and*" *lie not*. This tie occurs also in the Syriac Peshito version. But of course it is apocryphal. The two assertions stand detached. But as the apostle, when affirming that *he says truth in what he says*, realised, in the very act of affirmation, the reality and inwardliness of his relation to Christ, so now, when he asseverates that *he does not lie*, he realises correspondingly, or "parallelistically," that his own conscience, as depurated and exalted by the Holy Spirit, gives its instant and unmistakable attestation to the reliableness of the declaration.

The word *conscience* is here the best translation of which the original term (*συνείδησις*) is susceptible; although, if we should wish to do full justice to the Greek idea, we would require to card together mentally the two words *conscience* and *consciousness*. The truth is that our English language is richer than the Greek in its possession of the two differentiated terms. But for that very reason both of the terms are relatively im-

poverished in import. In French the one word “conscience” retains its original dualism of import, and is for that reason a perfect translation of the Greek term.

In the usage of the New Testament writers—as in that of the classic writers who were imbued with the Stoic philosophy<sup>1</sup>—the term in question almost always throws out into relief its moral import. Hence we read of a *good* and *pure*, as also of an *evil*, *defiled*, and *seared* conscience. We read of *conscience toward God*, and of *conscience void of offence*. The moral character of the conscience, in this acceptation of the term, is strikingly represented by the derivative word, *conscientiousness*. The expression, *conscience of idols*, found in 1 Corinthians viii. 7, rests on a reading which has been abandoned by Lachmann, Tregelles, Tischendorf, Westcott-and-Hort, and which is discountenanced by the important uncial manuscripts X A B. In Hebrews x. 2, the psychological idea of *consciousness* is predominant—“*no more*” *consciousness* “*of sins*.” It is also strong, though not predominant in 2 Corinthians i. 12, “*the testimony of our συνείδησις, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world.*” In the passage before us the psychological idea of *consciousness* must not be lost sight of, but the moral idea of *conscience* is pre-

<sup>1</sup> See Jahnel’s able monograph, *De Conscientiæ notione apud veteres et apud Christianos, usque ad Medii Ævi Exitum*. 1862.

dominant. The *conscientious principle* within the Apostle attested the veracity of his utterance, when he said, *I am not lying*.

There has been considerable dispute among interpreters in reference to the participial expression, rendered in King James's version, *also bearing me witness* (συνμαρτυρούσης μοι). Does it mean simply *bearing witness "to" me*? Or does it mean *bearing witness "with" me*? or *bearing "joint" witness "to" me*? Erasmus was for a season perplexed. In the first edition of his New Testament,<sup>1</sup> he paid the slightest possible heed to the preposition in composition; almost treating it as if it were "otiose." In the subsequent editions, however, of his translation, he gave emphasis to the preposition, and in his last edition he added a note in reference to it. His amended translation ran thus, *my conscience also bearing witness to me*.<sup>2</sup> He thus landed in the third of the three interpretations specified. And his authority, although running counter to the influence and example of both Wycliffe and Tyn-dale, swayed the rendering of Lord Cromwell's English Version of 1539, and thus the rendering in King James's Version of 1611. Beza adopted the same rendering. But Calvin hesitated. In his Latin *Translation* he introduced the Erasmian "also"; but he made no use of it in his

<sup>1</sup> *Attestante conscientia mea.*

<sup>2</sup> *Attestante mihi simul conscientia mea.*

*Exposition.* In his French *Translation*, as likewise in his French *Exposition*, he entirely ignored it. His rendering is the first of the three which we have specified. That is the rendering too of the Vulgate. De Wette vacillated in his various editions. Krehl, with his customary decisiveness, pronounced the translation "*with me*" to be "false." And Tholuck opposed it perseveringly from the first to the last of the various editions of his *Commentary*.

Alford, like Tholuck, opposes the idea of concurrent testimony. But, unlike Tholuck, he fails to give any reasonable explanation of the preposition. He says that it "denotes *accordance with the fact*, not *joint testimony*." But *concurrence in testimony* is manifestly the natural implication of the term; although it might easily happen that the preposition in composition would, in consequence of inexactness in usage, collective or individual, be sometimes practically "otiose." It is so, for instance, in the old incorrect reading of Rev. xxii. 18; and strikingly so in the Complutensian reading of the Septuagint version of Jer. xi. 7 (see Spohn *in loc.*). But there is no reason, arising either from classical or biblical usage, or from the nature of the peculiar case that was present to the apostle's mind, when he dictated the statement, why we should try to get quit of the idea of *conscience* that is so naturally suggested by the term. In the *Philok-*



*tetes* of Sophokles, Neoptolemos is made to say, "It is never the worthless who die in war, but the worthy," and then Philoktetes replies (439), "I agree with you" (ἔνυμμαρτυρῶ σοι), *I join my testimony with yours*. It is an obvious case of *joint testimony*. In the *Laws of Plato* (book iii., 680), Megillus the Lacedemonian says to the Athenian stranger, "Homer seems decidedly to testify (μαρτυρεῖν) to your doctrine (regarding the primitive state of mankind)." "Yes," replied the stranger; "he does indeed co-attest it (ἔνυμμαρτυρεῖ γάρ); he confirms it; *he concurs with me in testifying to that which I have been testifying.*" This, the natural idea of the word, is obviously its import in many other passages.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the exact relation of the pronoun connected with the verb, the *me* (μοί), it must no doubt be regarded as governed by the preposition in composition, so that the proper translation of the expression is "*testifying with me.*" In other circumstances, the idea might have been, "*jointly testifying to me*" or "*for me.*" The pronoun would then be in *the dative of advantage* (*dativus commodi*). But in the case before us such a view of the relationship indicated would be strained. Far better and simpler and more natural is it to construe the preposition with the pronoun, just as in the passage from the *Philoktetes* of Sophokles,

<sup>1</sup> See Xenophon's *Greek History*, iii. 3, 2, Euripides's *Hippolytus*, 285, and his *Danäe*, 112 (ed. Barnes).

and the passage from the *Danæe* of Euripides, and the important New Testament passages, Romans ii. 15 and viii. 17. The apostle<sup>1</sup> then says, *my conscience bearing witness "with me."*

It is worthy of note that the apostle allows himself the use of a popular representation of the *conscience*. He speaks of it as if it were something distinct from himself. He objectifies it to himself. It reminds one of the fine expression of Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*,—"the Man within the breast."<sup>1</sup> The Apostle makes his appeal to this "Man." He had referred simply to himself when he said, *I lie not*. That was his own proper testimony concerning himself. But, either deliberately or instinctively realising that out in the world, men often falsify even when they say, *We lie not*, he turns, introspectively, to the "Man within his breast," and listens till he hears him distinctly saying, *True, thou liest not when thou affirmest that thou hast great grief and continual sorrow in thy heart over thy countrymen*. Of course the Romans could not look into the apostle's breast, as he did himself, and verify the fact of concurrent testimony on the part of the Man without, and the Man within. To them there was but one testimony. There was but one person in the witness-box, the apostle himself. But

<sup>1</sup> *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, part iv., chap. iii., p. 380, seventh edition.



the apostle was not thinking of strictly juridical evidence, or intending to subpoena a plurality of formal witnesses. He was not leading formal evidence at all, to constrain conviction. He had not merely to satisfy the Romans. That might or might not be possible. He had to satisfy himself; and that was possible, if he was really honest. Thus it is that after his outward affirmation, he turns in, and receiving inward confirmation, he, as it were, re-affirms his declaration. To all who knew the man, such a solemn re-affirmation would render "assurance," if that were possible, "doubly sure."

He adds the important words *in the Holy Spirit*, which are not, with Winzer and Fritzsche, to be united with the expression, *I lie not*, as if the intermediate clause, *my conscience bearing witness with me*, were parenthetical. Neither are they to be regarded as directly qualifying the expression, *my conscience*, as if the apostle were representing his conscience as enveloped in the Holy Spirit, and thus swayed and ruled by It. This was the interpretation of Grotius; but if it had been the idea of the apostle, we should doubtless have had the Greek article interlinking the two expressions.<sup>1</sup> It is more probable, as Meyer, Philippi, Van Hengel, Von Hofmann correctly judge, that the phrase is to be connected with the participial expression, *bearing witness with me*.

<sup>1</sup> τῆς συνειδήσεώς μου τῆς ἐν Πνεύματι Ἀγίῳ.

The apostle's conscience thus bore witness *in the Holy Spirit*. Like the other apostles, and Stephen and Barnabas, and the rest of the primitive worthies, Paul *was a man "full of the Holy Spirit,"* so that, at every point of his spiritual being, he was touched by the heavenly influence. His thoughts, his feelings, his purposes, were all touched and energised. His conscience was touched and bathed. There was still, it is true, the unimpaired principle of moral freedom in the centre of his being, in virtue of which it devolved on himself, as a real "self-contained" person, to welcome and to cherish the hallowing influence. The man's individual manhood was not absorbed into the infinite essence. Neither was his moral accountability merged or superseded. He could still act for or against, toward the right hand or toward the left, in the direction of what is above or in the direction of what is beneath. But his freedom had made its choice; or rather, he in his freedom had made his choice. "To him to live was Christ." And hence all the avenues to the very centre of his being were habitually left open to the ingress of the Holy Spirit of God. He "resisted" not the Holy Spirit. He "grieved" Him not. And when therefore his inward conscience bore concurrent testimony with his outward declaration, there was more than itself in the voice of that conscience. There was the echo of the voice of God's Holy Spirit.

But what is it which the apostle thus solemnly asseverates “in Christ,” and concerning which he says, “I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit”? It is what we read in the second verse; namely, “*That I have great grief and continual heaviness in my heart*” (ὅτι λύπη μοί ἐστὶν μεγάλη, καὶ ἀδιάλειπτος ὀδύνη τῇ καρδίᾳ μου). The word *heaviness*—in its modern usage at least—is rather a feeble translation of the apostle’s term, λύπη; but it came down to King James’ translators from Wycliffe. Tyndale handed it on; then Coverdale; then Lord Cromwell’s revisers; then the Geneva translators. Luther’s translation was much superior, *Traurigkeit*, as also that of the Rheims—the reproduction of the Vulgate,—*sadnesse*. Although the radical idea both of the word *sadness*,<sup>1</sup> and of the corresponding word *grief*, seems to be *heaviness*; yet in usage, intensity of feeling is indicated by both the terms.

The word *sorrow* in the parallel clause, or *sorwe* as Wycliffe has it, is an excellent translation. It admirably denotes the *soreness* of heart which the apostle had long experienced.

His own Greek term (ὀδύνη) seems to have in it, onomatopoeetically, an echo of the exclamation which is extorted from us when we are in great

<sup>1</sup> Spenser in his *Faërie Queene*, says:

“With that his hand, more *sad* then lomp of lead.”

pain. Some of the older expositors, such as Peter Martyr, Pareus, Trapp, Winckler, explain the term as denoting the pangs of parturition. But they evidently confounded it with another term (*ὠδὶς*), which however is really affiliated, and seems simply to intensify the natural exclamation of pain.

As the apostle says of his *grief* that it was *great*, so he says of his *sorrow* that it was *continual* or *unceasing*. It abode with him. It lay down with him; it rose up with him; it was his *sad* companion in all his journeys, in all his joys, in all his labours of love. It was too, he says, *in his heart*. It was no mere external wail, no empty profession, or pretence. It was a real inmate of his soul.

What was it that occasioned such great grief and continual sorrow to the apostle? He does not directly say. His feelings were breaking loose, so that his language becomes abrupt and broken. When we proceed however to read the next verse, we discover at once the occasion of his sadness. It was the spiritual condition of his countrymen at large that was oppressing him, and filling him with overwhelming grief. To the great body of his countrymen the apostle was no patriot, and Jesus was no Saviour, far less *the Saviour*. He was to both Pharisees and Sadducees less than the least of all their Rabbis. They had no faith in Him at all. He was in their estimation either an unconscious and unintelligent

errorist and fanatic, or a deliberate impostor. By taking up so wild a chimæra-of-idea in reference to the Saviour, they, as it were with their own hands, shut in their own faces the opened door of salvation. They excluded themselves from the legitimate hope of that “everlasting life” that is bliss. Hence the apostle’s protestation of intense and unceasing sorrow over their condition. But yet he does not actually specify the persons of whom he was thinking till toward the conclusion of the following verse; and hence the statement in this verse is but a phraseological *torso*. Important parts of the reality are broken off in representation. The apostle’s heart was too full to utter forth, all at once, the wail of his spirit. Sob succeeded sob. And, in the abrupt brokenness of his lamentation, there is a kind of negligence in his words that is more effectively and touchingly eloquent than the most cunningly constructed rhetoric.

He says, verse 3, “*For I could wish to God to be myself an anathema from the Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh*” (ἡγόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ). Here the apostle specifies expressly who were occasioning the profound and long-continued anguish of his soul. It was “*his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh.*” He had other brethren indeed, kinsmen according to the spirit,

kinsmen in Christ. But it was his Hebrew compatriots over whom he so bitterly mourned.

Why such sorrow? His compatriots were in danger of being *anathemata from the Christ*. A lurid spiritual doom was gloomily looming over their future. There was, in the apostle's estimation, appalling peril. Hence the agony of his heart. The ploughshare of grief had been tearing up and drawing out into furrows all that was most sensitive in his spirit, till he self-sacrificingly felt that if it were possible for him to secure their eternal gain by means of his own eternal loss, he would willingly leap into the abysmal depth of perdition, taking his people's place and suffering in their room. It is the acme of a mood of mind incomparably Christ-like.

The expression *ἠχόμην* is a Greek idiom, meaning in English idiom, *I could pray*, or, *I could wish-to-God*. The Greek idiom grew out of the natural import of the imperfect or incompleted tense, *I was praying*.

The apostle does not mean that at some given time in the past he was actually praying that he might be an anathema for his kinsmen. He was using the word in its idiomatic import. We are to think of the natural import of the term only so far as is necessary to impress upon our minds, in passing, the growth of the idiomatic use of the imperfect tense. Take for instance some other case, as for example the idea or idealisation of



prayer as present in the apostle's mind. Express it verbally. Put it into the imperfect tense; then, just because of the essential nature of that tense, it will represent as incomplete the idea affirmed. If it were wished to represent the act as completed, some other tense than the imperfect would require to be employed. Hence grew up the idiomatic use of the imperfect to represent, not what had eventuated historically, but what might or could eventuate in certain given circumstances. Take another instance: The expression in Galatians iv. 20, *I "could" wish (for reasons obvious enough, and if my other engagements did not forbid), to be once more in the midst of you.* Or take the expression in Acts xxv. 22: Agrippa said to Festus, *I also "could" wish to hear the man myself (viz. if it were not, O Festus, trespassing too far on your indulgence).* So in the case before us: *I "could" wish to God to be vicariously an anathema for my kinsmen, if my conceptions of my duty on the one hand, and of God's wisdom and will on the other, would allow me to carry forth into completion such a desire and such a prayer.* It is implied in the apostle's idiomatic declaration that, as a matter of fact, he had never actually prayed to be made an anathema from the Christ for his unbelieving kinsmen. He never could deliberately offer up such a prayer. It would have involved desire not only for unimaginable suffering, but likewise for something still more

unimaginable, perpetual alienation from “the Christ,” and thus for perpetual moral depravation and degradation. It is impossible to entertain the idea that the apostle ever presented such a prayer to his heavenly Father. Michaelis does not state the case too strongly when he calls it, in its idealism, “a frantic prayer.” Others, as Bucer for instance, speak of it as “prodigious or “portentous.” The utmost stretch of conceivability extends, we should suppose, no farther than to this,—that the apostle felt, time after time, the incompleted uprising of an impulse to pray to God that, if it were compatible with all great interests, permission might be given him to be, by the sacrifice of his own happiness, the means of rescuing his infatuated countrymen from their doom. Such sacrifice he gladly would make *if it were among the moral possibilities*.<sup>1</sup>

Note the collocation of the words: *ἡχόμην γὰρ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*. It might in English be thus represented, *For (I) could wish-to-God to be an anathema—I myself—from the Christ*. This collocation was recommended by Griesbach, and adopted into the text by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and Westcott-and-Hort. It has the support of the highest diplomatic authorities, inclusive of the Sinaitic, Alexandrian, and Vatican manuscripts, as also of D E F G. It receives support, besides, from

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix II. THE APOSTLE'S ANATHEMA IN VERSE 3.



the Itala, the Philoxenian Syriac, and the Gothic versions; as also from a troop of the Fathers. The collocation of the Received Text is somewhat different. It stands thus—*ἐγὼ ἀνάθεμα εἶναι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ*, and would be literally reproduced thus: *For I myself could wish-to-God to be an anathema from the Christ*. There is only a slight variation, as regards significance, in the two collocations. In that of the Critical Texts the emphasis of the apostle's desire is advanced a perceptible shade beyond what is expressed in the collocation of the Received Text.

“*Anathema*.” The word was originally employed to denote what was, by way of consecration, *put up* in a temple. The *anathema* might be an offering of gratitude for deliverance or some other blessing; or it might be, in the ages of spiritual darkness, a kind of sacred bribe presented to the deity. But whatever it was, it would, if of convenient bulk and shape, be hung up on a pillar, or suspended on the wall of the shrine. It thenceforward belonged to the god; and it would have been not only theft or robbery, but sacrilege, for any one, even a priest, to have appropriated it. When the term was adopted by the Greek-speaking Hebrews, it was used in exchange for the Hebrew *הֶקֶם*, which had for its radical import the idea of severance or *cutting off*. (See Fürst *in voc.*) Whatever was

by Divine arrangement utterly *cut off* from any particular man's enjoyment or use was **הָרָם** to that man. God reserved its use. It was His **הָרָם**. If it were a thing that still continued fit for human use or enjoyment, God might assign it to His peculiar servants, for their benefit (see Lev. xxvii. 21 ; Num. xviii. 14 ; Ezek. xlv. 29) ; or, if that were not desirable, he might put it entirely out of the way, or doom it to destruction. A **הָרָם** was frequently a thing *devoted to destruction*. (See 1 Kings xx. 42.) Such devotement to destruction is often desirable in a world such as ours, so polluted, so perverted, so abused. There are things which cannot be turned to better account than to be utterly destroyed. There are moral nuisances which can only be swept away by the "besom of destruction." Among these moral nuisances are morally leprous and festering men, who "will not" be healed of their contagious sores. These and their infected rookeries must be swept away. The sooner, the better for society at large. God will be glorified in the work of destruction. Hence the word *anathema*, which at first meant something valuable devoted to a god, came, when applied within the sphere of the moral government of the living and true God, to denote objects which had become irreclaimably corrupt, and which consequently He wisely doomed to be destroyed. The apostle, disintegrating one particular line of Hebrew

thought from amid the complexity of ideas that were woven around the word *anathema*, felt at times that, if the ethical element were eliminated from the case, he could submit to be himself destroyed, even from "the presence of his Lord," if thereby his kinsmen could be constituted heirs of everlasting life and bliss. The *destruction* of which he thought was thus the annihilation, not of his being, but of substantial elements and factors of well-being.

*From the Christ.* The word *anathema* is used pregnantly, so that the apostle in thinking of its contents sees in them separation from all that renders human existence desirable, and thus separation from Christ Himself, that is to say, "from the Christ," his dearest Lord. Nothing could have been a greater deprivation to him who said, "To me to live is Christ," and who said again, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

*For the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.* The peculiar preposition (*ὑπέρ*) used by the apostle, and radically meaning *over*, is not here employed, as so often in the classics, to express the idea of substitution. This idea indeed is implied in the apostle's statement. But the implication is inherent in the nature of the case, more than in the idiosyncrasy of the word.

The expression, *my kinsmen according to flesh*,

is a primitive Semitic mode of denoting *kinship*, so far as *literal lineage* is concerned. Both the apostle and the Jews of his time were descended from Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, and thus they together constituted a generation of the theocratic people.

Ver. 4. *Who are Israelites.* It is not a simple relative of which the apostle makes use when he says "who." It is a peculiar compound pronoun (*οἱ τινες*), that has no parallel in English. The force of the apostle's expression might be represented thus: *who belong to the category of Israelites, who, whatever else they may or may not be, are Israelites.* The differentiating characteristics of Israelites were realized in the apostle's compatriots, inasmuch as, *being the descendants of Abraham and Isaac through Israel*, they were the heirs of grand theocratic prerogatives. The name *Israelites* was a most honourable one, and dear to them all. The relationship which it signalled was fitted to remind them that by the condescension of the Omnipotent One there was something "princely" within their reach. (Gen. xxxii. 28; Hos. xii. 3.)

*Whose are the adoption, etc.* The apostle enumerates several of the most conspicuous prerogatives of the Israelites. First of all, he specifies *the adoption*; i.e. *the Divine adoption, the*

act by which God puts a people or a person into the position of a "son." Under the Old Testament economy the Divine adoption realised itself specifically in the collective theocratic people as a people. "Israel is My son, My firstborn," said the Lord to Pharaoh. (Exod. iv. 22; see Jer. xxxi. 9, Hos. xi. 1.) The collective people were for great messianic purposes adopted into a relation of Divine sonship, and thus into a relation of peculiar Divine privilege; not however because of a feeling of partiality in the heart of God toward a section of His human family, but because His benignant messianic purposes, wide-spreading to the ends of the earth in their merciful reach, required some arrangement of the kind. Such was the Divine plan in the Old Testament ages. The Israelites were God's "son," or, under another aspect of representation, they were His "daughter," "the daughter of His people." At times the representation tended anticipatively toward the grander principle of personal individuality; as when it is said in Isaiah, "I have nourished and brought up *children*, and they have rebelled against Me." But it was reserved for the New Testament age to give emphasis to the idea of personal individuation in relation to the Divine adoption. "But *as many* as received Him, to *them* gave He the privilege to become *children of God*, even to them who believe on His name." (John i.

12.) “Ye are *all sons of God*, through faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26.) “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *children of God*.” (1 John iii. 1.)

*And the glory.* The reference is not to the future glory that, by the grace of God, will be coupled with celestial honour and immortality. Nor is it to any form or phase of that ethical glory which transcends all other glories, actual and possible. The reference seems to be to that peculiar symbol of the Divine presence which guided the Israelites out of Egypt and through the wilderness, overshadowing them by day and illuminating them by night. (See Exod. xiii. 21, 22; xiv. 19.) This was called, in the daily language of the Israelites, *the glory of Jahveh*. It was in some external respects His glory *par excellence*. (See Exod. xxiv. 16.) It was a magnificent symbol of Divine guidance and protection, and was denominated in rabbinical phraseology, *the shekinah*. Wherever it was found, *there* was God to be found; not indeed as in His palace-home, the “house not made with hands,” but as in His temporary tent beside His tented people in the period of their pilgrimage—a very present Helper and Defence.

*And the covenants; i.e. and the Divine covenants.* These were, as the Hebrew word (בְּרִית = σσνθήκη) suggests, engagements on the part of God to



confer distinguishing privileges on the patriarchs, and the Israelites in general, on condition of responsive appreciation on their part, and the observance, in all the affairs of life, of His regulative will. (See Gen. xv. 1-6, xvii. 1-8, 15-19; Exod. xix. 1-9.) But these engagements, while thus involving in their essence, as is suggested by the Hebrew term, a certain ineradicable conditionality, were at the same time, and in accordance with the essence of the Greek term, spontaneous and unencumbered dispositions of goods and distributions of benefits, just as if they had been actually "willed" to them by testamentary deed. God "disposed" of certain portions of His means and goods for the benefit of His national son, though it was utterly impossible that He could alienate the goods from Himself, or alienate Himself from both His present usufruct and His perpetual right of property. It is noteworthy that Lachmann, in his text, gives the singular *covenant* or *disposition* instead of the plural *dispositions*. For this reading he has high diplomatic backing; viz. the Alexandrine MS. and the Vatican, besides the Augiensis and Bournierianus. The Vulgate version too supports it, and Cyprian. Still the reading of the Received Text is, on the whole, the best authenticated, having the support of the Sinaitic MS., the two Syriac versions, along with the Gothic, Coptic, and Armenian,



as also of a troop of the Fathers. It is moreover the more difficult reading, and therefore to be preferred, according to the special canon of Bengel (*Proclivi scriptioni præstat ardua*). The singular word *covenant* occurs frequently in the Old Testament Scriptures. The plural *covenants* never. It was therefore more likely that the singular word should have been introduced by a critical writer to supersede the plural, than that the plural should have been intruded by a transcriber to displace the singular. Yet after all it is matter of only a slight variation of standpoint, whether we regard the Israelitish prerogative as consisting in the various dispositions of possessions and property, made in favour of the peculiar people, or look upon all those deeds as collected into the unity of a heritage, which, when enjoyed by men, constitutes them at once "heirs of the world" and "heirs of God."

*And the giving of the law.* Literally, and the legislation; i.e. and the Divine legislative enactments published from Mount Horeb, and constituting, in their sum, the code which is generally called the "moral law." It is incomparably the best of all bases for the innumerable details of practical jurisprudence. It goes back indeed in its form to that remote and primitive era when duty was, to a most preponderating extent, identified with moral self-restraint. Hence its in-

junctions are wisely set forth in negations. But when the detailed expanse of *the decalogue* is condensed into the summation of *the duologue*, the phase of representation is become affirmative; and nothing can excel the duological enactments in comprehensiveness, completeness, simplicity, and direct authority over the reason and the conscience.

*And the service*; i.e. the temple service—a grand ritual. It is here regarded as a Divine appointment or grant of grace. Hence it has its place among the prerogatives of the Israelites. Being in its many and varied details instinct with practical significance, it was fitted to recall to the minds of the worshippers what was due to God, on the one hand, and how much was graciously provided by Him, on the other.

*And the promises*. No doubt the great messianic promises. The word *promises* means *announcements of coming favours*. They are the *avant-coureurs* of the favours themselves, and are sent forth (*pro-missiones*) to stimulate expectation and to support the heart. All the Old Testament dispensations were replete with messianic promises. There were the promises in particular of the Messiah Himself. His coming was “*the promise—the one running promise—made to the fathers*” (Acts xiii. 32). It involved all the other messianic blessings, such as the atonement, the kingdom of heaven, the reign to be continued “as long as the

sun," the "new earth," the "inheritance of the world." (Rom. iv. 13, 14.) It involved peace, joy, hope, all of them unspeakable and full of glory. (Rom. v. 1-11.)

Ver. 5. The apostle continues his enumeration of the prerogatives of his people, and speedily soars aloft toward the zenith-point of their privileges.

*Whose are the fathers. The patriarch-fathers,* the band of whom Abraham was the leader and the conspicuous typical representative. They were far indeed from being men without blemish. But perhaps most of the sinister bars in their escutcheon were parcels of the heritage which they had received from those of their kindred who went before. But notwithstanding their obvious blemishes they were at once child-like in faith and reverential in spirit. Their thoughts rose up on high. They "sought a heavenly country," they "looked for a city whose builder and architect was God." (Heb. xi. 10-14.) It was no little advantage to be descended from such sires.

*And from whom arose the Christ as regarded His human nature; i.e. so far as the human element of His being was concerned* (κατὰ σάρκα). The Messiah emerged from among the Hebrews, and thus "salvation was of the Jews." It was their crowning prerogative. Jesus was a Jew. But

His own people knew not their privilege, and they perceived not that it was the time of tide in the day of their merciful visitation. "He came to His own, and His own received Him not." (John i. 11.) They slew Him instead. (Matt. xxi. 39.) When the apostle said, *so far as His human nature was concerned*, his mind was already mounting the infinite height which rose beyond. Hence what comes immediately after.

*Who is over all, God, to be blessed for ever. Amen.*

The Greek words—strange to say—are, so far as grammatical construction is concerned, susceptible of several interpretations, based on differences of punctuation and intonation. Ezra Abbot specifies and discusses seven of these interpretations. ("The Construction of Romans ix. 5," pp. 87–154 of *Journal of Biblical Literature and Exegesis*, 1882.) We shall not seek to be exhaustive in minute particulars. It suffices, for our *practical* aim, that we set in mutual antithesis the two conspicuously conflicting views. The one may be regarded as fairly represented in our public English version, the Bible of 1611: *Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* Or it may be represented thus: *From whom, as concerning His humanity, the Christ arose, who is over all, God to be blessed for ever. Amen.* The antithetic rendering is as follows: *Of whom, as concerning the flesh,*

*the Christ came. May He who is God over all be blessed for ever. Amen.*

In both renderings there is the expression of exultant feeling. In the latter case, this feeling is bodied forth in abrupt doxological form; in the former there is continuative christological affirmation, but rapt in character, and ending with the solemn liturgical "Amen." If this interpretation be accepted, the current of thought flows on, full volumed, in the direction of the Christ as distinguished from the infinite Father, and as referred to in the immediately preceding clause. If the other theory of explication be accepted, then the current of thought is suddenly diverted to God the Father as distinguishable from the Christ. According to the former view, our Lord is expressly spoken of as both "over all," and as "God to be praised for ever." According to the latter, he is expressly distinguished from the Father, in so far as the Father is "God over all."

This latter view is taken by both Lachmann and Tischendorf, as well as other editors, such as Schott, Buttmann, the two Hahns, and Dr. Hort, all of whom insert not a comma, but a period, after the expression, "according to flesh."

In the Alexandrine manuscript (A) there is after the word "flesh" a space for a stop, and there is likewise a stop in the space. In the Vatican (B) there is a stop, though no appro-

priated space. In the Ephraemi (C), in Paris, there is a space with a cross in it; and there is likewise a space in the codex Bezae (D).<sup>1</sup> The presence in these manuscripts of a stop, or of a space for a stop, whether occupied or not, seems to afford evidence that the writers contemplated an interpretation like the second we have specified, that which ascribes a doxology of thanks to the Father. But during the mediæval ages this interpretation seems to have retired almost entirely out of sight.

Erasmus was fascinated by the doxological interpretation, and ultimately settled in it. After the lapse of more than two centuries Wetstein and Semler gave their vote, with great decisiveness, for the same view, the doxological; and they have been followed by quite a lengthened retinue of recent expositors and critics, inclusive of Reiche, Winzer, Fritzsche, Köllner, Glöckler, Schrader, Krehl, Ewald, Meyer, Oltramare, Van Hengel, Weizsäcker, Beyschlag, Volkmar, Beet, Ezra Abbot, etc.

The patristic writers, on the other hand, went—in almost solid phalanx—for the first or christological interpretation.<sup>2</sup> In turning to Romans ix. 5, they found, with unbounded joy,

<sup>1</sup> See Vance Smith's "Biblical Note," in the *Expositor*, No. liii., first series.

<sup>2</sup> Some however hesitated. See the long notes of Wetstein and Tischendorf (eighth edition).



that the language which was, in their higher dogmatics, usually reserved for the Father was yet freely applied to the Son. It was demonstration to them that, according to the conception of the Apostle Paul, the Saviour is truly and gloriously "*God manifest in flesh.*"

Let it be further noticed that, in the apostle's theology as evolved in other epistles, the Saviour is represented as Divine in the highest form of divinity. In His pre-existent state He was "in the form of God." (Phil. ii. 6.) "In Him" and "by Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through Him, and to Him; and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist." (Col. i. 16, 17.)

Besides, in the christological superscription of this very Epistle to the Romans, the apostle discriminates, somewhat as in the passage before us, the two natures of our Lord—His human, metonymically called His "flesh," derived from the lineage of king David; and His superhuman, called His "spirit of holiness," according to which He was, by His own resurrection, inclusive of all other resurrections, demonstrated to be *God's-Son-in-power*, His Father's fellow in the highest sense of the term, His "fellow" therefore, not merely in ethical resemblance, but likewise in



metaphysical nature or being. There is but a step between this representation and that which is embodied in the christological interpretation of Romans ix. 5.

Then, if we should close the reference to Christ with the words *according to flesh*, or *according to His human nature*, and interpret the remainder of the statement as a doxology to the Father, the apostle might seem to lay himself open to the charge of constructing, for entrance into his idea, one half of a folding door of thought, and one half only, leaving the structure as unaccountably incomplete as Romans i. 3 would be, if verse 4 were wrenched off and verse 3 left in suspended isolation; thus: "concerning His Son, who, as regards His human nature, was born of the lineage of David." . . . Does not that seem to be conspicuously only one half of a grand unity of idea?

If it should be said that the antithesis might be inwardly involved, though not outwardly unrolled, it would be a legitimate answer, that, whether directly or indirectly, outwardly or inwardly, formally or only virtually, the super-human element must be postulated if there is to be a completed antithesis in thought, of folding to folding, or leaf to leaf.

Moreover, it is entirely at variance with the doxologies of the New Testament (Luke i. 68, 2 Cor. i. 3, Eph. i. 3, 1 Pet. i. 3), and all but

entirely at variance with the much more numerous doxologies found in the Septuagint Version of the Old, to put the subject of the proposition before the predicate. The accredited order of doxological representation is not, *He who is God over all be blessed!* but, *Blessed be He who is God over all!*<sup>1</sup> And hence it is unlikely that we have here a doxology to the Father, and it is consequently likely that the clause in question is a further characterisation of “the Christ,” who emerged from among the Israelites, so far as His human nature was concerned. Beyond that nature, and far aloft, there was a point of unity, at which personality linked itself on to personality, and in which the nature of the Father and the nature of the Son coalesced and coalesce—was and is.

If moreover the writer had been desirous of inserting a doxology to the Father, it seems

<sup>1</sup> See Gen. ix. 26, xiv. 20, xxiv. 27, xxiv. 31, xxvi. 29; Exod. xviii. 10; Deut. vii. 14; Ruth ii. 20, iv. 14; 1 Samuel xv. 13, xxv. 32, 33, 39; 2 Sam. xviii. 28, xxii. 47; 1 Kings i. 48, v. 7, viii. 15, 57; 2 Chron. ii. 12, vi. 4; Ez. vii. 27; Ps. xviii. 46; xxviii. 6; xxxi. 21; xli. 13; lxvi. 20; lxviii. 19, 35; lxxii. 18; lxxxix. 52; cvi. 48; cxix. 12; cxxiv. 6; cxxxv. 1; cxliv. 1; Zech. xi. 5. The one exceptional case is Ps. lxviii. 19. In all the other instances of occurrence, it is εὐλογητὸς Κύριος.

The numbering of the Psalms goes on two lines. The one presents them as they are numbered in Tromm's *Concordance*. The other presents them as they are numbered in our English version. The latter numbering is given in this note in order to facilitate verification.

rather difficult to conceive what particular object he could have had in view in introducing the participle of the substantive verb (ὢν). It would have been, apparently, so much more natural to have said ὁ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεός, κ.τ.λ. *He who is God over all*, etc.

And why, indeed, seek to give emphasis here to the idea of the Father's supremacy? Was there any danger of any of the apostle's disciples, or of any of his remoter followers or brethren, thinking equality with the Father a prize to be snatched at, in the great economy of grace, by the Son? (Phil. ii. 6.)

It is to be noted that there is no article prefixed to the Θεός, intensifying the idea of divinity. The article which precedes the participle is of course to be construed with the participle, not with Θεός. The Christ therefore is not here represented as "emphatically" *God over all*. Still He is represented as *God*; and *He "is" over all, God to-be-blessed for ever. Amen.* He is "over all," with one exception, that needed not to be formally specified. (1 Cor. xv. 27.) He is over all the patriarchal fathers; over all men everywhere; over all created persons, the sum of whose existences, when added to the existences of *things*, is the universe. As thus "over all," the Christ is God-to-be-blessed for ever. Amen." He is God; but not so as to cause or occasion the absorption or semi-absorption, or any diminution of the distinctive being of

the Father. He is one with the Father in absolute unison of character, and absolute unity of nature.

The expression *ὁ ὢν* is idiomatically insusceptible of literal translation into English. We cannot say *the being*, meaning substantially *who is*, or *He who is*, and thus using the word *being*, not substantively, but participially. Yet we can think the Greek idiomatic expression, both in its relation to what goes before and in its relation to what comes after. Note the article, on the one hand. It draws attention to the individual specified in what goes immediately before; viz. "the Christ." Note the participle, on the other. It fixes attention upon a state of being, characteristic of the specified individual, but far transcending the human nature of "the Christ."

Erasmus—always tending toward the doxological interpretation—had an alternative conjecture to propose; viz. that the first moiety of the expression should be attached affirmatively and historically to the preceding clause, while the second moiety should be sundered off into a concluding doxology to the Father. The statement in its entirety would then run thus:—*From among whom the Christ arose, as respects His human nature, who is above all. God be blessed for ever. Amen.* But such a construction, although approved of by Baumgarten-Crusius, is obviously a product of strong doctrinal prepossession, on the one hand,

and of utter exegetical despair, on the other. It need not at this time of day be discussed.

The expression *blessed*, or better, *to-be-blessed*, is based on the assumption that created intelligences should express to their Creator their admiration of His character, and their gratitude for the outflow of His tender mercy. Since God has so signally "*blessed*" *men*, they should stir up all that is within them to "*bless*" *Him*.

*For ever.* Literally, "*into the ages.*" As the apostle looked forward, he could not find, even in the remotest future, a point of time at which created intelligences should cease to bless the great Creator. He looks till he can look no farther. Age stretches beyond age, interminably.

*Amen.* It folds back, in the liturgy of our spirits, over the finished statement that precedes; repeating it, so to speak, deliberately, impressively, solemnly, doxologically.

Ver. 6. *But it is not such as that the word of God has failed.*

The apostle's language in the first part of the statement is peculiar, and linguistic purists would not hesitate to speak of it as irregular. It is abrupt and broken; and hence critics have often been perplexed,—some of them exceedingly—in their efforts to untie the grammatical knot. In King James's version, as in Tyndale's, the intro-

ductory conjunction "*but*" is unhappily omitted. It cannot be dispensed with. The apostle had felt his spirit drawn onward and upward as he proceeded with his enumeration of the high prerogatives of his countrymen, till at length he found himself climbing "the ladder which Jacob saw," and which leads direct to "glory, honour, and immortality." He was, as it were, "caught up" in a rapture, and carried "off and away." Ere he was let down again, he had exclaimed liturgically and with fulness of heart, "Amen." Being unable for the present to proceed farther in that sublime rapture, he as it were recalls himself, and returns to the melancholy fact which is bewailed in verses 2 and 3. The fact however, as a fact, is not expressly stated. The statement of it is, as it were, semi-smothered under the intensity of the writer's feelings. Yet the enumeration of theocratic prerogatives finds a place in the writer's record, just because there was oppressively present to his mind and heart the fact that his countrymen in general had, through their rejection of Jesus the Messiah, ousted themselves from the privileges of "the kingdom of heaven." They had deposed themselves from the enjoyment of the high prerogatives of the peculiar people of God. They were refusing to be "Israelitês indeed," and were virtually passing upon themselves sentence of spiritual expatriation. Such was the lamentable fact which the apostle so sensitively bewailed.



Confronting that fact, he now says, as in a spirit of recoil, "*But*" the case is not such as that the word of God has fallen out of its due fulfilment. The apostle's theodicy commences with this "*but.*" The melancholy fact referred to might and would occasion much embarrassment to multitudes of men; but it would not and could not embarrass the Divine moral Governor. It would not and could not frustrate the fulfilment of His promises, even in relation to the people of Israel. The disbelief of the Jews, melancholy as it was, and their self-deposition from their high pinnacle of privilege, melancholy as that too was, were yet within the sphere of the full over-rulement of God.

And hence, as says the apostle, "*the state of the case was not such as (to amount to this) that the word of God has failed of its accomplishment.*" Such an allegation would not be in accordance with actual historical fact.

The apostle might have simply expressed himself thus, dropping out of view the relative: (*But the state of the case is*) not (*to this effect*) that the word of God has failed.<sup>1</sup>

The apostle specifies *the word of God*; i.e. the word spoken by God through His prophets to the Israelitish people, and in substance preserved in *the volume of the book*. On the one side, it was simply predictive; on the other, it was distinctly promissory. But in both respects a

<sup>1</sup> ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτι ἐκπέπτωκεν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ.



distinguished and distinguishing share of blessing was held out to "the peculiar people," and that peculiar people was "Israel."

The word of God *has not failed of fulfilment*; literally, *has not fallen out*. The idea is transfigured from many a homely occurrence; as when, for instance, from the back of some burden-bearer an article falls, and is lost.

*For not all who are of Israel are Israel.* The apostle lays down a far-reaching principle. God had an ideal in view when He made choice of Israel to be His peculiar people. He had grand aims for the future ages—aims that are yet to be realised in all peoples. (Gen. xii. 3, etc.) Israel was chosen to be for a season "the peculiar people," not for their own sakes exclusively or chiefly, but for the sake of the whole terrestrial family of nations. The selected people could not all at once grasp the grand idea. It was not to be wondered at. Neither would God be exacting. Still His ideal must not be pushed aside. Neither must it be reversed, like an inverted pyramid. Still less must it be ignominiously trampled under foot. For God was not shut up to Israel. If needful, He could find in the evolution of the ages an Israel beyond Israel, or an Israel within Israel. And as regards the old Israel, if it should persist in misunderstanding its position and mission, fancying itself to be the indispensable centre of

the whole human circle, it could be told, in that language of events which makes epochs in history, that its candlestick was removable, and would be removed to make way for a lamp that would actually give light. There were Israelites *and* Israelites. There were Israelites in full possession of the name, but entirely without the inward ideal that gave it significance; and there could be Israelites without the name, but with the inward ideal, though yet only struggling like a star through the mists of ignorance and imperfection. (Rom. ii. 29.)

In the verse before us we have the two kinds of Israelites brought into juxtaposition—*not all who are of Israel are Israel*; i.e. not all who are the progeny of the patriarch Israel are truly and ideally the Israel “to whom pertaineth the adoption.” God therefore will not break His promise, though He refuse to fulfil it to those who have forfeited, by their unbelief, all right and title to an illustrious position and their illustrious name. He is free to oust those who have persistently abused their high prerogative, and to introduce into their room a people who would seek to rise to the level of their high calling.

Ver. 7. *Nor because they are Abraham's seed are they all children; but, IN ISAAC SHALL SEED BE NAMED TO THEE.*

Such is a literal translation — perhaps too literal, and literally Semitic. But the outstanding idea is obvious; *viz.* that the written history of the Hebrews makes it evident that mere lineal descent from the patriarchs, however uncontaminated, was not sufficient to assure to the apostle's countrymen the high theocratic position of the true Israel.

Beginning his statement with the negatively continuative *nor*, he reminds his readers that the principle verified in God's dealings with the children of Israel had a parallel application in His dealings with the immediate offspring of Abraham. *It was not the case that all these were children, because they were Abraham's offspring.* The expression *children*, here used absolutely, may be interpreted as meaning either *children of Abraham* or *children of God*. Theodoret, in ancient times, and Glöckler, in modern, understand it as having the latter acceptation; and the next verse makes it obvious that this interpretation must be either explicitly or implicitly received. Most likely it should be received only implicitly, or, in other words, the term *children*, while strictly relative to the fatherhood of Abraham, is yet unexhausted by such import and relationship, and is therefore to be understood as having a coincident reference to the fatherhood of God.

There are various ways in which we may

contrast Abraham's generic "seed" or "offspring" and his peculiar "children." In the verse before us, it is not so much a distinction as regards faith or the works of faith that is signalised or suggested. Emphasis is elsewhere given to that distinction. (See Rom. iv. 11-17, Gal. iii. 29.) But here it is rather a distinction as regards messianic prerogatives that is referred to. Various races sprang from Abraham; but only one of them could, in the nature of things, be the messianic people, amid whom the Messiah was to appear, and grow up, and accomplish his great atonement for sinful human beings all the world over. Hence it could not be legitimately contended concerning the Abrahamic peoples, that because they were the patriarch's offspring, therefore they were all his messianic children.

There is no high and dry distinction intended between the *seed* or *offspring* and the *children* of Abraham. The terminology might have been reversed, so that the contrast would have run thus: *Nor because they are Abraham's "children" are they all his "offspring"*; for it is immediately added, *But, In Isaac shall "offspring" be called to thee*. The idea, whichever way we alternate the filial terms, is sufficiently manifest: *Nor because they are his lineal "offspring" are they all his messianic "children"*; or thus: *Nor because they are his lineally descended "children" are they all his messianic "offspring."* Of the

various races one only could be the messianic people; so that the reliance of the Jews for the highest messianic blessings upon their pure patriarchal descent, might be, and really was, a broken reed to lean upon. Well might John the herald exclaim, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham for our father; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matt. iii. 9.) God's hands are not tied. And it is far from being the case that He was restricted to the Hebrews for His "holy nation" and "peculiar people."

Meyer goes backward to the preceding verse to find, in the expression, *they who are of Israel*, the nominative to the substantive verb in the first clause of this verse: *Nor because "they who are of Israel" are Abraham's offspring, are they all children.* But the two statements in the two verses are constructed on one principle, so that it is better to go forward to the second clause of the seventh verse for the subject of the proposition: *Nor are "all" Abraham's children because they are his offspring.*

The expression, *In Isaac shall offspring be called to thee* (Gen. xxi. 12), might be interpreted thus: *In Isaac shall offspring be divinely called forth for thee.* (See Rom. iv. 17-21.) But it is better to understand the promise nuncupatively thus: *In Isaac shall offspring be*

*named to thee.* The offspring which the patriarch already had *in Isaac*, and which was to be increased *through Isaac*, and carried downward in his descending line, was the offspring which was to be emphatically signalised *by name* as Abraham's peculiar offspring—his messianic descendants. So did God arrange in the exercise of His unchallengeable sovereignty.

Ver. 8. *That is, not the children of the flesh, not these are the children of God, but the children of the promise are accounted for offspring.*

This is the apostle's comment on the Old Testament promise. Within the family circle of Abraham there were children who should never have been. They were not really wanted in the world. Their existence was attributable to the unrefined manners of the age. Hence they might be called *the children of the flesh*. The designation was sufficiently explicit, at least for all practical purposes, and could stand in appropriate antithesis to the designation of others as the *children of promise*, and thus the messianic *children of God*. Such were Isaac in particular, and then Jacob, and their legitimate descendants. God promised these to Abraham, and they were thus at once *the children of "the" promise* and the messianic *children of God*. To the exclusion of all the other descendants, they were *reckoned for messianic*



*offspring*—reckoned by God. He had the sovereign right to choose—and He exercised His right.

The phrase, *children of God*, is susceptible of varied applications. All men are His offspring (Acts xvii. 28), and thus His children. The pure, the benevolent, and the unrevengeful, these in particular are His children. (Matt. v. 45.) And if, from among the lapsed, any rise up and longingly and earnestly urge their way toward purity and benevolence and a forgiving spirit, then all these are emphatically “the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26.) Having “received” Christ, they have “power to become the sons of God.” (John i. 12.) Jesus Himself is the Son of God, in the highest possible acceptation of the designation. In metaphysical nature, as well as in creative origination of things, and in ethical assimilation, and express image, is He “*the Son of God*.” But in the passage before us the designation, instead of being extended to any of these, is restricted to those who were God’s *messianic children*. Viewed in unity, they are His national son,” His first-born. (Exod. iv. 22.) Viewed in disintegrated individuality, they are His theocratic sons and daughters.

Ver. 9. *For this word is one of promise, At the return, next year, of this season I shall come, and there will be a son to Sarah.*



The apostle accounts for his expression, *the children of the promise*. There was really a promise in relation to the messianic race, and its first application was in the home of Abraham. *For this word*,—says the apostle, pointing forward to the Divine declaration which he is just about to quote. The declaration is promissory in its nature. Jahveh promised to revisit the patriarchal home, after the revolution of a year; and important messianic results were to ensue. *I shall come*, or, as it is in Genesis xviii. 10, *I will certainly return*. The precise time is specified, *according to this season*, or, *at this season* (*viz.* next year). There is in Genesis xvii. 21 a more transparent phrase: “My covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to thee *at this set time* (*next year*).” The expression to which the apostle immediately refers is found in Genesis xviii. 14. But it is not happily rendered in King James’s version. It is more correctly translated by Kalisch, *when the season is renewed or returns again*; and still better by Bishop Browne, *when the season revives* (*Speaker’s Commentary*).

The phrase ascribes *life* to the returning season (פֶּעַת חַיִּה). The successive periods that occur within the cycle of time are conceived of as living by instinct, with a potency of periodic revival.

Why does the apostle make mention of this

particular promise in reference to Sarah and her son Isaac? It was because it showed the sovereign pleasure of God in selecting the channel in which the messianic stream was to flow. Abraham, under the depressing influence of hope-long-deferred, had said to God, *Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!* (Gen. xvii. 18.) He would have been content to have had Hagar's son as his heir, and "the heir of the world" (Rom. iv. 13). But God had decided otherwise. And naturally so, one would think, as well as supernaturally; for the patriarch had no other child so pure in origin as Isaac. Still, whether pure, or less pure in origination, the individual chosen had no claim upon God to be the selected channel of messianic honours. Isaac, apart from God's free engagements and promise, had no right to challenge for himself the high prerogative. And he would have suffered no wrong had the distinguishing privilege been conferred on Ishmael.

Still there seems to be a real congruity in the selection of Isaac, in preference to Ishmael. When once we have the two sons fairly within the field of our vision, and standing, as it were, side by side, with all their antecedents attaching to them, we see that there might have been the suspicion—at least some slight *soupçon* of a suspicion—of incongruity if Ishmael had been selected and Isaac passed by. Congruities and incongruities have potent influence in the most

judicial thoughts of men ; and much more may they be expected to have sway in the infinitely judicial intelligence of God.

Ver. 10-13. *And not only so, but Rebecca also, conceiving twins by one, Isaac our father—for ere the children were born, or had done anything good or evil, that the elective purpose of God may abide, not of works, but of Him who calleth,—it was said to her, The greater shall serve the lesser, as it stands written, Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated.*

The apostle takes another step downward in the course of time. *And not only so.* Not only was God's free elective principle in relation to messianic prerogative manifested in His choice of Sarah's son ; it was still more strikingly exhibited in His dealings within Rebecca's home, and in what was said, not so much of her, as to her. *But Rebecca also, conceiving twins by one, Isaac our father.* When the apostle says "*our*" father, he speaks from the standpoint of his Hebrew self-consciousness. He speaks as all his countrymen might speak. Rebecca's children were equal as regards parentage. In this respect they differed from Isaac and Ishmael. For they had not only the same father, they had likewise the same mother. It was most important for the apostle's countrymen to bear that fact in mind. It was deep-drawing, putting Edomites and Israelites

on one level; and yet all the more effectually leaving the way clear for the conspicuous exercise of the Divine choice in reference to the enjoyment of messianic prerogative. God actually chose the Israelites, in distinction from the Edomites, for the enjoyment of the high privilege; but the choice was not determined by any special purity of genealogical descent on the part of the Israelites.

Not only so. It should be particularly noted, that at the time when the destination of the messianic prerogative was announced, there was nothing of the nature of moral superiority attaching to the Israelites, or to their genealogical ancestor, the younger son of Rebecca. The apostle draws attention to the fact that when the announcement was made to the anxious mother, *the children were not yet born, and therefore had not done anything either good or evil* (φαῦλον). Nor is there in the ancient record the slightest hint of any tendency to moral superiority in the future that might account anticipatively for the selection. On the contrary, the announcement to Rebecca was made, says the apostle, while the children, not being yet born, had not done either good or evil; *and it was thus made, in order that the elective purpose of God, in relation to messianic prerogative, might remain unfringed and intact; the choice being determined not by the works of the chosen, but by the pleasure of Him*

who calls whom He wills to the enjoyment of His favours.

It was not the case then that the Israelites were exalted to the pinnacle of theocratic and messianic privilege because of special purity of patriarchal descent, on the one hand, or because of special superiority in ethical patriarchal character, on the other.

It was of importance therefore that the Israelites should not delude or mislead themselves. They had not earned their superiority in prerogative. Nor did it flow in the purity of their blood. And hence that superiority, however great, was no earnest or pledge that the higher blessings still, the blessings whose sum constitutes everlasting salvation, would be secured to them whatever should be their treatment of the Saviour. All the generations of their forefathers had been contributing to the advent of the Saviour; and if they did not become a "holy nation," in the higher acceptance of the phrase, they might now cease to be the one "peculiar people." No human right would be violated, no legitimate claim would be dishonoured, by such a revolution.

The grammatical structure of verses 10-12 is broken. (1) There is no verb to which the word *Rebecca* might stand as a nominative, and which might form the predicate of the proposition. Had the apostle availed himself of rhetorical

forecast, he might have used a dative instead of a nominative, and have said, *Not only so, but "to" Rebecca also, when she had conceived twins by one, Isaac our father, it was said, The greater shall serve the lesser.* Then (2) the expression, *the children*, is omitted in verse 11. And (3) the statement, or thought, that gives occasion to the introduction of the reason-rendering *for* (γάρ) at the commencement of the eleventh verse, is suppressed. If it had been forthcoming it would have overturned the existing broken relationship between verses 10 and 12, and would have been something to this effect: *And not only so, but Rebecca also, conceiving twins by one, Isaac our father, affords another illustration of God's elective principle; for, etc.* The apostle's language, when viewed rhetorically, is found to be disjointed. But no advantage would be gained by the expedient of throwing the entire eleventh verse into a parenthesis, as is done in King James's English version. Indeed, such a parenthesis is impracticable except *merely to the eye* as a mechanical affair of brackets. It is no real parenthesis. Nor is the construction relieved, or the interpretation facilitated, by the more frequent device of making parenthetical the second part of the verse, consisting of the words, *in order that the elective purpose of God might remain, not of works, but of Him who calleth.* On the contrary, the statement of verse 12, as an



integral part of the argument of the apostle, is materially impoverished by the withdrawment of the words in question. ↵

Meyer is too fastidious in his interpretation of the words, *And not only so, but Rebecca also*. As it is Sarah that is referred to in what goes before, and as another mother's name is here introduced, he supposes that the relationship subsisting between the two representations is such as might be thus exhibited: *Not only had Sarah a saying of God, but likewise Rebecca*, etc. This is seeking, on the one hand, too fine a balance of rhetorical structure, and overlooking, on the other, that in actual historical fact, as well as in the apostle's treatment of the case, it was never stated or suggested that Sarah had a *saying* of God to herself. It was to Abraham that God spoke, not to Sarah.

The expression, *Isaac our father*, is to be taken as in apposition with the preceding expression, *of one*; and the pronoun *our* has reference, not, as Fritzsche contends, to the spiritual, but to the historical Israelites.

The participles *γεννηθέντων* and *πραξάντων* are in the genitive absolute; and the adverbs which precede them are the *subjective* *μήπω* and *μηδέ*, instead of the *objective* *οὔπω* and *οὐδέ*, because the clauses to which they are attached represent negations *taken into account in the mind of God*, when He made His elective statement to Rebecca. The



statement was made in view of the fact that the twins were unborn, and consequently uncharacterized by any ethical action whatever, running on to ethical practice.

Still further, it is to be borne in mind that the Divine statement, made to Rebecca, was not isolated and irrelative, standing like a solitary pillar in a waste of wilderness. It was indeed one single utterance; but, as such, it was just one single detail of a vast complex plan. And hence the apostle thought of both its antecedents and its consequents; and, among its antecedents, took note of the aim which was divinely pre-contemplated. The oracle was delivered, at the particular time referred to, and under the particular circumstances which are recorded in the narrative, *in order that the elective purpose of God might continue, not of works, but of Him who calleth.* In the preceding election of Isaac in preference to Ishmael, for the enjoyment of messianic prerogative, there had been nothing on Isaac's part to earn the distinction. He had not worked for it, and then got it, because he deserved it. It was "not of works." The Divine choice was determined by some other consideration altogether, which however is unrevealed to us, and therefore lies imbedded in the sovereign but all-wise will of Him who never does anything but what He "pleases," and who never pleases to do anything but what is "right." It was

hence to be expected that in choosing between Rebecca's twins, for the destination of messianic pre-eminence, no regard would be had to meritorious works. For, in the first place, there was no scope for the performance of such works before the children were born; and then, in the second place, it was manifestly wise in God to make such arrangements in reference to the destination of the prerogative, that the Israelites, who enjoyed the privilege, should not be warranted to build for themselves, in connexion with its enjoyment, a high castle of self-conceit. The apostle was assured—and most reasonably so—that in the choice of one of the twins God's elective purpose would “remain” exactly as it had been in the home of Abraham and Sarah; and hence it would not be “of works,” but “of Him who calleth,” and who calleth whom He will.

The word *calleth* is not to be overlooked. When applied to moral agents, it assumes the possession of free-will. *They are “called,” but not compelled or necessitated.* According to the nature of the case, a “call” may assume the form either of a summons or of an invitation. It may sometimes be allied to a *commandment*; it may sometimes be allied to an *entreaty*. In the case before us, where the reference is to prerogative, which in its inner ethical content may be either welcomed and prized, or spurned and stamped under foot, the call will be essentially

of the nature of a Divine *invitation*. Some of God's greatest blessings He simply provides and confers without sending forth an invitation. To the enjoyment of others He gives invitation, and, as it were, says, "Ho, every one! come ye." Some such invitation is addressed to persons, some such to peoples. And in both cases invitation may pave the way for further and ulterior invitation. They who "have," in the sense of accepting what has been proffered, and of keeping and prizing and guarding what they have got, to them shall be given, and they shall "have" more abundantly. Invitation to them will follow invitation, till the highest blessing is reached; and they find in their delightful experience that blessed are they who are God's invited guests to the everlasting banquet of bliss. To all the highest blessings there is a Divine "call" or "invitation." For "whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son (in glory); and whom He did predestinate, *them He also calls*; and whom He *calls*, them He also justifies; and whom He justifies, them He also glorifies." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.)

We come now to consider the statement that was made to Rebecca: *The greater shall serve the lesser*. It is quoted from Genesis xxv. 23. In the preceding verses of the ancient record, the twenty-first and twenty-second, we read: *And*

*Isaac entreated Jahveh for his wife, because she was barren: and Jahveh was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled within her; and she said, If it be so, wherefore am I? (Wherefore is this the case that I am? The expression is one of despondency or of complaint.) And she went to inquire of Jahveh. And Jahveh said to her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other; and the greater shall serve the lesser. There had been some "man of God" within her reach, perhaps kindred in spirit to such an eminent individual as Melchizedek. Jahveh could be consulted through him. The consultation took place, and the consequence was that an oracle was delivered to the anxious mother, having for its concluding clause the words, *the greater shall serve the lesser.**

Let it be noted, first of all, that the words which the apostle quotes from the oracle are introduced in the original Greek by the demonstrative *ὅτι*. It is untranslatable, unless we turn the reported words into the indirect form of address, and thus transform *shall serve* into *should serve*. *It was said to her, that the greater "should serve" the lesser.* It is better however in translating into English to merge the demonstrative and preserve the future verb *shall serve*.

Then let it be noted that the words quoted are a prediction.

Let it be further noted that the prediction of the relation of the *greater* to the *lesser* has no reference whatever to the persons Jacob and Esau. The mind of the seer who spoke for God to Rebecca looked far ahead of the infants concerning whom inquiry was made. He does not speak of them at all, whether considered in their infancy or in their subsequent maturity. He makes not the slightest reference to their personal peculiarities and future fortunes. But as they were to be founders of peoples, it is of these peoples only that the oracle takes notice. Of them only does it make any assertion or mention. It begins thus: "*Two nations* are in thy womb." It proceeds thus: "*Two peoples* shall be separated from thy bowels." It then advances thus: "And the one *people* shall be stronger than the other *people*." And after this comes the statement which the apostle quotes, "And the greater shall serve the lesser." There is thus no reference in any part of the oracle to the persons Jacob and Esau, *considered as persons*.

It follows, that it is unfortunate for scientific exegesis that, in the statement quoted by the apostle, the words *greater* and *lesser* should be replaced in so many versions by the chronological words *elder* and *younger*. For, first, it is awkward to make the chronological distinction of *elder* and *younger* in reference to peoples so truly simultaneous in ethnological origin, that they

sprang from twin-patriarchs. We might speak with freedom of the elder or younger of the twins; but we cannot without the greatest awkwardness speak of the *elder* and *younger* of the *nations* referred to. And so, if we think and speak at all along the line of the statement of the oracle, we must think and speak, not of the patriarchs Jacob and Esau, but of the nations of the Israelites and Edomites, who descended from the patriarchs.

Then, secondly, the chronological words *elder* and *younger* are by no means the most natural rendering of the terms employed by the apostle, and by him borrowed from the Septuagint translator. The word *μείζων*, for instance, which we have translated *greater*, just means *greater*. It is the case indeed that the elder in a family of two children is generally, for a considerable number of years, the greater. And thus the relative sizes of the two children are for a time proportional measures of their ages. Of two brothers the older is "the big brother." We hence find that both in Greek and Hebrew the common word for *great* or *greater*—*μέγας*, *μείζων*, and *גָּדוֹל*—is occasionally employed as equivalent to the word *elder*. See for instance Genesis xxvii. 1, in which we read that Isaac "called to him Esau his *great* son." So reads the Hebrew. In the Septuagint the expression runs thus: "Isaac called Esau *his elder son* (*τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν πρεσβύτερον*). In



Genesis xxix. 16, again, we read, "And Laban had two daughters; the name of *the great one* was Leah, and the name of *the little one* was Rachel." In the Septuagint the verse runs thus: "And Laban had two daughters: the name of *the larger* (τῇ μείζονι) was Leah, and the name of *the younger* (τῇ νεωτέρῃ) was Rachel." Manifestly in this passage the word μείζων is used chronologically as equivalent to πρεσβύτερος, *elder*. All this must be conceded. Yet it nevertheless remains true, that the radical import of μείζων is *greater*, not *elder*; and if, in the passage before us, it should by any translator be rendered *elder* instead of *greater*, then there should be forthcoming some good reasons, or, at all events, some one good reason, for the freedom of the rendering. There is all the greater need for the adduction of such reasons or reason, inasmuch as the word in question, so far as its New Testament usage is concerned, occurs in other forty-four passages, and in not one of them has it ever been, or can it ever be, translated *elder*. In one of the passages (Jas. iv. 6) it is translated *more*, "*more grace*"; and in all the other instances of its occurrence it is rendered either *greater* or *greatest*. Such moreover would be the preferable rendering in James. There would need then to be some imperious reason or reasons for rendering the word *elder* in Romans ix. 12, inasmuch as, in order to obtain such a version, we have to sweep aside



the otherwise invariable usage of the word throughout the New Testament.

There is imbedded in the original oracle, as it stands in Genesis, a parallel clause, to which some attention should be paid, although it has not been adduced by the apostle. The entire oracle runs thus: "Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy bowels; *and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, or shall outstrip* (ὑπερέξει) *the other people; and the greater shall serve the lesser."* The word *greater* thus gathers up what is implied in the expression *shall be stronger* or *shall surpass* or *outstrip*; and hence the evidence seems irrefragable that we should hold to the ordinary and radical import of the term in question, and render the oracular words thus, *the greater shall serve the lesser*, and not thus, *the elder shall serve the* √ *younger*. This conclusion is fortified when we take into account that the word in Hebrew which is rendered μελίζων in the Septuagint version, but *elder* in our public English translation, is זקן, which occurs in the Old Testament Scriptures more than five hundred times in all. That is certainly a sufficient amplitude of field to admit of very various renderings. But yet in not one instance of the word's occurrence, with the single exception of Genesis xxv. 23, is it ever translated *elder*. It is very frequently rendered *great*, frequently *many*, and sometimes *mighty*.

There is still one other fountain of evidence from which we may draw water. Esau is represented as Isaac's favourite twin, on whom he intended to confer his principal blessing. (See Gen. xxv. 28; xxvii. 1-4, 18-41.) For such preference we may cease to wonder when we take into consideration the simple statements of the text in reference to the simple tastes of the patriarch. But we could never account for it on any principle of simplicity, or on any other principle creditable to the patriarch, if we shall suppose that the oracle made it plain, that the pre-eminence was divinely intended to be put past the elder and made sure to the younger. We cannot account for Isaac's strong predilection except on the assumption that the oracle left it entirely indeterminate which of the patriarch's twins was to be the father of the messianic seed, and to which of the two was to be assigned the first link in that genealogy that was to issue in the *greater* and *stronger* people, who yet were to occupy, in relation to the other people, a position of subordination and servitude. If, contrariwise, we should assume that the oracle made known to Rebecca and Isaac which of the two children was to be blessed with the messianic prerogative; and if in particular we shall still further assume, with the great sixteenth century theologians, both supralapsarian and sublapsarian, such as Calvin, Beza, John Knox, S. Rutherford,

Perkins, William Twisse,—great eagles all, who soared for ever toward absolute unconditionalism in Divine decrees,—if with these theologians we shall assume that the oracular words quoted by the apostle were quoted just because they represent the reality of unconditional election to eternal life, in the one case, and equally unconditional reprobation to eternal death, in the other, as taking effect in the persons of the twins: then it is utterly inconceivable how Isaac, on the one hand, could set himself in antagonism to God's revealed decrees, and how Rebecca, on the other, could have had heart and hardness enough to nurse the little reprobate that was laid upon her lap.

We *must*, it would appear, come to the conclusion that it was not said to Rebecca, *the "elder" shall serve the "younger."* It was said, *the "greater" shall serve the "lesser";* and it was left entirely indeterminate which of the two peoples was to be the greater and stronger, and which was to be the lesser and weaker.

One conclusion from the whole case is incontrovertible: pure patriarchal descent did not suffice to insure the enjoyment of high messianic prerogative. Here were twins, the children of Rebecca by her husband, the patriarch Isaac; and their respective descendants were to be separated into distinct peoples, and the distinct peoples were by no means to be on an equality in respect

of messianic and theocratic privileges. "One was taken, and the other was left." They were "made to differ." Full responsibility indeed was left intact on either line. Light sufficient, and opportunities sufficient, were secured to both peoples. The gospel was for all, and, in one way or another, uttered forth its voice to all. The gospel *is* "preached to every creature under heaven."<sup>1</sup> But the high peculiar prerogatives consisting of and connected with the birth and personal ministry of the Messiah were necessarily restricted to only one of the peoples. And hence the demonstration was complete that pure patriarchal descent was not sufficient to insure the enjoyment, within the inner court of God's grace, of the highest spiritual prerogatives. How could it, when it was not even sufficient to secure for both the Edomites and the Israelites the enjoyment of the various outward prerogatives which are to be found in the outer court of the Divine favour?

Meyer, while perceiving that the oracle quoted by the apostle should be rendered, "The *greater* shall serve the *lesser*," and not "the *elder* shall serve the *younger*," and while admitting that the reference, so far as Genesis is concerned, is, not to two individuals, but to two nations, yet strangely supposes that, so far as Romans is concerned,

<sup>1</sup> See Col. i. 23, and consider John Goodwin's *Pagan's Debt and Dowry*. (See Appendix III.)

the apostle has in view, not the two nations, but only the two individuals; and he caps this supposition with another, that the words *greater* and *lesser* have reference to the size of the respective twins when born, Esau being the *larger* and Jacob the *smaller* child. Such suppositions are purely conjectural, in the *first* place. And, in the *second* place, they embarrass the interpretation of the expression "shall serve"; for, as a matter of fact, Esau as an individual never served Jacob. And then, in the *third* place, they render the predilection of Isaac unaccountable.

The Edomites—one of the two peoples that were seminally in Rebecca's womb—grew rapidly into might and greatness, even in Esau's lifetime; and for a considerable period afterwards they outstripped the Israelites in national development. In bulk and force and military equipment they shot far ahead. When the Israelites were on their journey through the wilderness to the Promised Land, Moses sent envoys from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying fraternally, "Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that has befallen us. . . . Let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country. We will not pass through the fields or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand or to the left, until we have passed thy borders. *And Edom said to him, Thou shalt*

*not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword.*" Moses re-urged his touching fraternal appeal; but in vain. Edom's army was "mobilised," and he came out against his brother Israel "with much people and with a strong hand: . . . therefore Israel turned away from him." (Num. xx. 14-21.) Edom was thus *greater* and *stronger* than Israel. But, later on, Saul fought against the Edomites, and "vexed" them. (1 Sam. xiv. 47.) And David at length conquered them, and reduced them to a tributary condition. "He put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, *and all they of Edom became David's servants.*" (2 Sam. viii. 14.) The tables were thus turned. Israel had at length become *greater* and *stronger*: and the people that had formerly been greater and stronger were made to "serve" the people that been lesser and weaker. In the midst of the feuds however that harassed and fettered the subdivided tribes of Israel, the Edomites "revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves: so Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites who compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled to their tents." (2 Kings viii. 20, 21.) Their effort to regain their national independence failed. Their state of "servitude" remained. "Yet," adds the annalist, "Edom revolted from under



the hand of Judah unto this day." (2 Kings viii. 22.) But not with permanent success. Amaziah re-subjugated them. "He slew of Edom in the Valley of Salt ten thousand, and took Selah (or Petra) by war." (2 Kings xiv. 7; 2 Chron. xxv. 11, 12.) But they rallied yet again, and "smote Judah, and carried away captives" (2 Chron. xxviii. 17); until finally John Hyrcanus completely broke, and for ever, the back of their national independence, slaying many and causing the remainder to be circumcised, and to merge their nationality in the people that had once been *lesser* and *weaker*. (JOSEPHUS: *Antiq.* xiii. 9, 1.)

The struggles of the two peoples were in some miniature mode and degree prefigured in the peculiar experiences of Rebecca ere the children were born. Struggles seem to be portended. And the people who at first were greater and stronger became at last the servants of the people who were smaller and weaker.

When we expand the specific expression "serve" into some such generic idea as is represented by the word *inferior*, then we see that all along from the respective incorporations of the two nationalities to the final mergence of the *greater* nation in the *lesser*, there was pure patriarchal descent, and yet no theocratic and messianic prerogative on the part of the children of Esau. This was demonstration that to lean upon pure patriarchal descent for the highest



theocratic and messianic privileges was to lean on an utterly broken arm. Therein was manifested the infatuation of the apostle's countrymen.

Ver. 13. *As it stands written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.*<sup>1</sup>

The quoted apophthegm occurs in the book of Malachi i. 2, 3. It is an apophthegm which seemed to the apostle to run parallel with the oracle that had been addressed to Rebecca. It is parallel; but it is more explicit than the oracle. The oracle does not indicate which of the two peoples was to be the greater and which the lesser. But the prophet's apophthegm lifts the veil of uncertainty, and shows most unmistakably which of the two peoples was in actual inferiority to the other, so far as privilege was concerned. The two utterances therefore, while characterised by noteworthy variations, are in full accord with each other; and thus there was good reason for introducing the apophthegm after the manner of making a phraseological equation, *as it stands written*.

As in the case of the oracle, there is no reference in the apophthegm to the man Jacob and

<sup>1</sup> Our inquiry here must be "cautelous, and slow of foot, lest we run violently into error."—HUMPHREY SYDENHAM: *Jacob and Esau, Election and Reprobation, Opened and Discovered*, p. 4. (1627.)

the man Esau. The words *Jacob* and *Esau* are used patronymically to denote the respective peoples that derived their origin from the twin patriarchs. Such patronymical application of the two proper names is quite in accordance with the usage of the prophetic Scriptures. Thus, for example, we read that “Balaam took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, *curse me Jacob*, and come, *defy Israel*. . . . Who can count *the dust of Jacob*, and the number of the fourth part of *Israel*? . . . Surely there is no enchantment against *Jacob*, neither is there any divination against *Israel*; according to this time it shall be said of *Jacob* and of *Israel*, What hath God wrought! Behold, *the people* shall rise up as a great lion, and lift himself up as a young lion. . . . How goodly are thy tents, *O Jacob*, and thy tabernacles, *O Israel*!” (Num. xxiii. 7, 10, 23, 24; xxiv. 5.) These instances of the patronymical use of the name *Jacob* are but specimens of a very common occurrence. And so with the word *Esau* or *Edom*: It too, in its lesser sphere of reference, is frequently used to denote, not the man, but the people who were descended from him; as for instance in Jeremiah xlix. 10: “I have made *Esau* bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbours,

and he is not." It is admittedly not the man *Esau* who is here referred to; it is the people descended from the man.

So is it in the passage of Malachi that is quoted in Romans ix. 13. It would not be an appropriate quotation on the part of the apostle, were it not the case that the reference is to *the people Esau*, as distinguished from the patriarchal man. For the apophthegm is adduced in corroboration of the oracle that goes immediately before. And in that oracle, as by the aid of a succession of lights, the reference is most emphatically to two *nations* or *peoples*, one the greater and stronger, and the other the lesser and weaker.

And then when we turn from the context of the quotation in Romans ix. 12 to the context of the original apophthegm in Malachi i. 2, 3, we find that the reference is still incontrovertibly to the two peoples as distinguished from the two patriarchs. The prophet's words run thus: "The burden of the word of the Lord *to Israel* by Malachi,"—to *Israel*, mark; not to *the man Israel* or *Jacob*, but to *the people who sprang from the man*, the people who were living in the time of the prophet:—"I have loved you, saith the Lord." The Lord desired to evoke the gratitude of the people by impressing upon them the conviction that they had been the objects of very distinguishing favour. He had, through a

long series of dispensations, "loved" them—seeking to woo their attachment and devotion. He sought it, still more for their sakes than for His own. He was utterly unselfish in His desires; but He knew that His gracious presence was far more essential to *them* than was their reverential and loyal presence to *Him*. He could do without them; but how could they do without Him? "Yet ye say, Wherein hast Thou loved us?" They lost sight of the blessings they enjoyed, or at least of the Divine blessing that was in the heart of the advantages they enjoyed; and they were "unthankful." They brooded over their personal trials and national reverses, and failed, or ceased, to trace in their condition the operation of the great beneficent Hand. They said to God, "Wherein hast Thou loved us?"

The Lord answered their petulant question in argumentative manner, thus: "(Is) not Esau Jacob's brother?" In our national English version, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate, the supplemented substantive verb is given in the past tense: "(Was) not Esau Jacob's brother?" That however is a mistaken supplement, and unhappily diverts the thought from the patronymical to the patriarchal Esau and Jacob. The contents of verses 3, 4, and 5, as well as the exigences of the context in Romans, make it evident that the reference, and the exclusive reference, is to the patronymical Esau and Jacob.

Hence we should, with Luther, supply the substantive verb *is*, and not *was*: “(Is) not Esau Jacob’s brother?” “Supply *is*,” says Grotius. The meaning is, he adds, “Do not the Edomites and the Israelites alike derive their origin from Abraham and Isaac?” The people Esau or Edom was thus brother to the people Jacob. The two peoples, in consequence of the uterine relation of the patriarchs from whose loins they respectively sprang, were “brothers.” So Obadiah represents them. Looking into the future he says: “Thy mighty men, O Teman” (one of the cities of Edom), “shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For thy *violence against thy ‘brother’ Jacob*, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever.” The people Esau had been shamelessly devoid of sympathy for their brother Jacob in the day of the Babylonian invasions. The prophet proceeds: “In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive the forces of Jacob, and foreigners entered into his gate, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them.” Esau was far indeed from acting a brother’s part to his brother Jacob in the time of those invasions that terminated so humiliatingly in Jacob’s captivity.

Amos makes use of the same fraternal relationship to expose the aggravated criminality of

Esau: "Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Edom and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; (1) *because he did pursue his 'brother' with the sword*, (2) and did cast off all pity, (3) and his anger did tear perpetually, (4) and he kept his wrath for ever."

In the light of these passages from Obadiah and Amos, we see clearly the meaning of the words in Malachi, "*(Is) not Esau Jacob's 'brother'?*" saith the Lord." The question could only be answered in the affirmative. But the prophet, assuming that the intimate relationship of the two peoples was too incontrovertible to require formal affirmation, proceeds to say, giving human voice to the self-consciousness of God, "Yet I have loved Jacob, and I have hated Esau."

Note the perfect tenses. They convey the idea that the *love* and *hatred* specified were carried down in thought till the time of the affirmation of the two contrary poles of treatment. Slightly varying the standpoint of representation, we might render the verbs, after the manner of the Septuagint translator, aoristically: "*I loved Jacob, and Esau I hated*,"—thus pointing backward to some indeterminate time when the twofold mode of treatment was meted out to the two peoples. The apostle adopts the Septuagint translation, "Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated"; so that, when expounding Romans, we are to conceive of the



Divine eye looking through the eyes of the prophet, and fixing its gaze upon some historical fact of desolation—not determinately specified,—which had swept with “the besom of destruction” the land of Idumæa. The desolation had been so complete, that it was in truth the beginning of a very bitter end, when, as already stated, the victorious army of the Maccabæan John Hyrcanus compelled the miserable remnant of the people to merge their nationality in that of the Hebrews, and thus to submit to their effacement from the map of the nations of the world. (JOSEPHUS: *Antiq.* xiii. 9, 1.)

*Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.* Sebastian Münster, the illustrious Hebraist, thus remarks on the expression: “This was said by God, that He might show that He had conferred far greater benefits upon the people of Israel than upon the Edomites or other nations; and yet, so ungrateful were those Israelites, that they did not acknowledge the indulgence of their Father and the grace of their Lord.”

The expression, *I loved Jacob*, or *Israel*, brings into view such treatment of the Hebrews as might have been expected on the part of God, considered as a Master and a Father. (See Mal. i. 6.) Masters in general will be disposed to do more in behalf of their own servants than for others in the same sphere of life who are not related to them by the bond of kindly ministry.



A father in like manner will in general be ready to do for the benefit of his son more than he would feel himself inclined or obliged to do in behalf of others in corresponding circumstances, but yet not his children. Israel was God's servant. Israel was God's son. God had peculiar regard to that people. He was peculiarly beneficent toward them. He favoured them. He "loved" them. Such is the bright side of the picture. Let us turn round to the side of the dark shadow.

*But I hated Esau, or Edom.* The expression is an intentional phraseological foil, placed as it is and where it is for the purpose of lending, by means of its lurid background of representation, intensity of lustre to the preceding affirmation. It was not intended to teach that God was malevolent to Edom. Still less was it meant to convey the idea of unconditional reprobation to a doom of inconceivably dreadful and everlasting misery. The phrase, along with the antithetic expression, has no reference at all to the final doom or spiritual destiny of individuals. If it had, we should be constrained to have hard thoughts of the prophet, or perhaps of the infinite Being who inspired him; as also to maintain, that when it is said of the Hebrew people, "Jacob I loved," there was the assurance, in relation to the Jews, of their unconditional election to everlasting bliss. But such election,

if conceived of as involving, as its ethical effect, sanctification, could not be reconciled with the fire of condemnatory criticism that is volleyed forth from multitudes of criminatory utterances throughout the body of the prophecy.

What then is meant by the expression, *Esau I hated*? Some light is thrown upon the strong verb by such passages as these: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will *hate* the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." (Matt. vi. 24.) "If any man come to Me, and *hate* not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." (Luke xiv. 26.) "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that *hateth* his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." (John xii. 25.) In these statements there is certainly no intention of conveying an idea of malice by means of the strong word. The language is intentionally intense. There is in it, just as in the Saviour's remark regarding the camel and the eye of a needle, something of bold hyperbolism. Such hyperbolisms are common, and rife indeed, both in the language of literature and in the language of every-day life. They give piquancy to speech, and are relished by "all the world." So when it is said, *but Esau I hated*, the idea is comparative, not absolute; and there is really more in the representation

than in the reality, just because a phraseological foil was wanted. The idea is, that in the treatment accorded to the Edomites there was the conspicuous absence of all those elements of mercy, favour, and forgiveness, which distinguished the Divine treatment of the Hebrews and vindicated the expression, *Jacob I loved*. Taking the diversity of treatment into account, the Edomites might be said to be *hated*. They might be, they were, they are thus represented; for in truth there was now no room for national forgiveness to Edom. The cup of their iniquity they had themselves filled to the brim, and it was now time that they should be compelled to drain to its dregs the cup of merited retribution.

It was otherwise with Jacob in the days of the prophet. God, although greatly provoked, had not dealt with that people according to their desert. In wrath deserved He had remembered mercy. Through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah over the mighty kings of Babylon, many families were permitted and encouraged to return to the desolated city. The streets were restored. The walls were rebuilt. The temple was reconstructed, and an appreciable amount of prosperity once more rolled over the dilapidated city and the devastated land. "God loved Jacob"; for, with all the waywardness and faithlessness of the peculiar people, they were still, in virtue of their messianic destination, like a peculiar

treasure to God. They were the casket that contained the heavenly jewel; and for the jewel's sake the casket was carefully kept and sedulously guarded. "God loved Jacob."

It was otherwise with Edom. Like many surrounding peoples, they had a time of merciful visitation. Their local habitation had many advantages; they were blessed in "the fatness of the earth," and by "the dew of heaven from above." Beyond most other peoples, they were sheltered within the munition of rocks; and had they been willing to be good, they might have had a constant flow and flood of security and prosperity. But they became high-minded, aggressive, selfish, morally rank to heaven with rottenness, and were involved at last in the overflow of the Babylonian devastation. They were swept into captivity, and their country turned into a wilderness. "Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith Jehovah of hosts, They may build, but I will throw down; and all that pass by shall call them, *The land of wickedness*, and *The people against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever*." The prophet continues, addressing Jacob, "And your eyes shall see all this, and ye shall say, Jehovah will be magnified from within the border of Israel."

We have additional evidence in these state-

ments of the prophet's reference to the peoples *Jacob and Esau*, as distinguished from the individual persons. Edom saith, "*We* are impoverished," "*we* will return," "*they* shall build," "the *people* against whom Jehovah hath indignation for ever." "*Ye* shall say, The Lord will be magnified from within the border of Israel."

It is astonishing that, in the face of such accumulated evidence, Meyer can yet say, "Just like Paul, the prophet himself intends by Jacob and Esau, not the two nations Israel and Edom, but *the persons of the two brothers*." "Paul," says Fritzsche, "in quoting the words of Malachi, takes no account of the contextual statement. All that he means is this: that Jacob, before his birth, was embraced in the love of God, and that Esau, before he saw the light of day, was the object of the Divine hate." "It is," says Philippi, "the individuals Jacob and Esau who are meant by the prophet as well as by the apostle." "The aoristic verbs *loved* and *hated* refer, in Paul's conception, to the time before the birth of the twin-brothers."

Others, who cannot shut their eyes to the fact that the peoples are expressly designated, contend or assume that the individuals are meant, with the peoples included, or that the peoples are meant with the individuals included. "The prophet speaks," says Tholuck, "of the

patriarch fathers and the peoples as a unity.” “The passage,” says Hodge, “relates to the descendants of Jacob and Esau, and to the individuals themselves. The favour shown to the posterity of the one, and withheld from that of the other, being founded on the distinction originally made between the two brothers.”

But such an amalgamation of references is entirely at variance with the representations both of the prophet and of the apostle. Baumgarten-Crusius correctly says, “The reference is to the descendants, not to the patriarch-sires.” The apostle’s argument is irrefragable. Pure patriarchal descent on the part of the Israelites was utterly insufficient to insure to them those highest messianic blessings which are everlasting; for it was utterly insufficient, on the part of the Edomites, to secure to them those lower and temporary prerogatives, which were conferred on the Hebrews till the fulness of the time.

We now pass on to another part of the apostle’s great argument. The fourteenth verse runs thus: *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!*

Of the three distinct clauses of this verse, two are interrogative. The remaining third is a strong and peculiar negation.

As to the first interrogation, *What then shall*



*we say?* (τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν;) It occurs in the same "self-contained" form or mode in the thirtieth verse of this chapter, as well as in several other parts of the apostle's epistles. In all the instances in which it occurs, a new section in the apostle's reasoning is introduced.

We can readily conceive that the phrase would be in frequent use with Paul, when, in animated oral debate, he advanced from stage to stage on the line of any of his great discussions. It indicated that a natural halting-place in thought had been reached by him, and that it would be opportune to utilize the halt for remustering the mental forces, with a view to a new departure in argument.

The expression, it is noteworthy, is used by Paul only of all the New Testament writers. And it is still further noteworthy, that it is used by him only in this Epistle to the Romans. The phrase seemed to find for itself a peculiarly fitting habitat in an epistle of a peculiarly logical character. Hence it is noticeable, that, after the argumentative part of the epistle is concluded, the apostle ceases to make use of the phrase. He has for the time being stepped out of the arena of debate. It thus happens that we do not find the expression in the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters, which are all hortatory in their character.

The inferential *then* looks backward over the



ground that had already been traversed. The interrogation, *What shall we say?* looks forward to the domain that is stretching out before. The plural *we* shows that the debater was wishful to carry his readers along with him.

*What then? What shall we say?* To what conclusion shall we come? "Is there unrighteousness attaching to God? Is there unrighteousness by the side of God?" (*μη ἀδικία παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ*;) The character of God is, for the moment, pictorially represented as something outside the Divine selfhood. It is abstracted in thought from the inwardliness of the Divine personality; and when thus looked at, is it seen to be righteousness or unrighteousness?

Surely, says the apostle, it is "not" the case that unrighteousness attaches to God. Such is the radical import of his interrogation.

But why should the apostle propose such a query? Was there any one with whom he had to do, who was likely to be charging God with unrighteousness?

We may safely assume that there was no one.

But why then ask the question he proposes?

The reason is, not that any parties contemplated by the apostle were disposed or tempted to charge God with actual unrighteousness, but that some party was prepared to challenge the apostle's ideas as wrong, and entirely subversive, *in principle*, of the righteousness of God. It is

the Jews to whom he is referring as his assailants. It is of them that he is speaking in this chapter, and in the next, and in that which follows.

It was their self-complacent, self-elating views he was combating. He found that they were shielding themselves from the arrows of conviction, and from the morally transfiguring influence of the glorious gospel of God's grace, behind a rampart of spiritual presumption. They dreamed that they were the favourites of heaven. Were they not the children of the blessed patriarch Abraham? Was not their patriarchal blood pure? Had it not been carefully guarded by all those stringent ordinances that kept them divinely secluded and intact in the midst of the ungodly Gentile world around? Surely they were not in any imminent danger. To imagine that they might be in danger of perdition—the doom and portion of the uncovenanted and the godless—was nothing less than to suppose that God might deal unrighteously with them. But God forbid!

Some expositors, who have strong ideas regarding Divine fore-ordination, and who imagine that the apostle is in this chapter maintaining that God has unconditionally elected some of mankind to the enjoyment of everlasting life, while He has, with equal unconditionality, reprobated the rest of our race to the endurance of woe, are of opinion that in the question, *Is there unrighteousness with God?* there is a reference to

the dual statement of the preceding verse, *Jacob I loved; but Esau I hated*. They are of opinion that the apostle anticipated objections to his doctrines of unconditional election and unconditional reprobation. They think that he was aware that there was something in the very form, fashion, and appearance of the doctrines that was apt to suggest the ideas of Divine partiality and unrighteousness. They hence think that the apostle took the earliest opportunity of disclaiming the inference of unrighteousness in its relation to absolute predestination and universal foreordination.

But this conception of the apostle's reference proceeds on an entirely inaccurate view of the import of the words, *Jacob I loved, and Esau I hated*. And it also loses sight of the fact that it is with the Jews' opinion regarding themselves that the apostle is wrestling; and the Jews assuredly had never dreamed of objecting to any ascription to themselves of high prerogative. It is certain that they would strongly approve of both branches of the antithetic apophthegm in Malachi; for that apophthegm bore on its front that, while adverse to the interest of the Edomites, it was wholly in favour of the Jews. Nothing would be more improbable therefore than that they—with all their haughty notions of their own secure condition and exalted position—would object to the idea that they were the darlings of

Jahveh, while the Ishmaelites and the children of Esau were His menials and outcasts. It is quite impossible that the apostle can be here referring to any supposable objection to the words of the Old Testament apophthegm.

His reference—as we have seen—goes far deeper into the drift of the chapter in its entirety; and most powerfully does the apostle argue that if there was confessedly no unrighteousness in the exclusion of the Ishmaelites and Edomites from the temporal privileges of the theocratic people, there could not possibly be any in the exclusion of the persistently impenitent Israelites from the higher privileges of the kingdom of heaven.

*What then? What shall we now say? Is there scope in the apostle's doctrine for the charge of unrighteousness? He says, God forbid! He is prepared, moreover, to argue the matter; and argue it he will. But before he moves one hair's-breadth in the direction of debate to prove that there is the utter absence of scope for such a tremendous charge, he relieves his heart by uttering his most solemn exclamation, God forbid! Far be it! Far be that from God! The apostle not merely begs to differ. Strong feeling is heaving in his spirit, and bursts forth into articulate expression. Castellio's musical translation of the phrase in his French version is Nenni-dà (No indeed).*

Ere we pass from the consideration of this fourteenth verse, it is pleasant to have it to note that it was a settled principle in those early times that *God is possessed of holy moral character*. Hence the shock that had been inflicted on the apostle's heart, and that constrained him to exclaim in pain *Nenni-dà!* God is not only Power or Force. He *is* that. "Power belongeth to Him." Nothing among the possibilities is "too hard" for Him. He *has* and *is* infinite Force. It is in touch with everything around us, beneath us, above us, within us. But there is something more. There is thought too. There is reason. There is infinite intelligence. There is wisdom and goodness. God is love. It is in the recognition of such phases of moral character as these, that we find the logical base on which to build up a *théodicée*.

Ver. 15. *For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion* (τῷ Μωυσεὶ γὰρ λέγει, Ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ, καὶ οἰκτειρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτείρω).

The apostle proceeds to render a reason for his strong negation at the conclusion of the fourteenth verse.

He fetches his proof out of a passage of the Jewish Scriptures, which clearly shows that God

claims for Himself a right to deal with the Jews on the very principle for which the apostle has been contending. Now, if the Jewish Scriptures themselves assert the very principle of procedure which the apostle contends is exemplified in God's dealings with the Jews, there cannot possibly be any discrepancy between the righteousness of God and the apostle's doctrine.

The passage which the apostle adduces is taken from the Pentateuch, which constituted the very charter of the peculiar privileges of the Israelites. It occurs in Exodus xxxiii. 19.

The quoted passage contains, not a statement of man concerning God, but a statement of God concerning Himself. It must therefore be looked upon by all Jews as containing incontrovertible and unexceptionable doctrine.

It is likewise worthy of note, that the quoted passage contains a statement made by God *to Moses*, the great lawgiver of the Jews. It was made to him in most interesting circumstances: when God was showing him transcendent kindness, and promising distinguishing mercy for the people, in whose behalf he had been interceding. It must be a weighty statement, and one that does full justice to the Jews.

It runs thus: *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.* Manifestly the passage is most appositely quoted, as will be



clearly seen, when we go into some details in reference to the circumstances amid which God gave the recorded utterance of His mind to Moses.

It was after, but soon after, the people had made a golden calf, like the sacred bull Apis, to receive the homage due to "the god which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt." We are told in Exodus xxxii. 9, 10, that, immediately after the fabrication of the idol-calf, "the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." God thus threatened to consume them for their sin without a moment's delay. But Moses, it is written, (ver. 11, 12, 13,) "besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth Thy wrath wax hot against Thy people, which Thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Thy servants, to whom Thou swarest by Thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and



all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever." It is then added, anthropopathically, verse 14, "And the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." He did not execute summary vengeance upon them. After this, as we learn from verse 15 of the same chapter, Moses went down from the mount, where he had been with God. But when he came near the camp and saw the idolatrous phrenzy of the people, the righteous indignation of his soul was stirred up; and, as we learn from verses 20 to 28, he took and burned, and ground to powder the idol-calf; and by the help of the Levites put to death about three thousand of the [ringleaders of the] rebellious people. He said to the remainder of them, as we see from verse 30, "Ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up to the Lord: peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." So he "returned to the Lord," and, as it is written in verses 31, 32, said, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them a god of gold. Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—[how blessed shall I account myself!] and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written." That is, *If Thou wilt consume the people, do not suffer me to survive their destruction.* Here we perceive that Moses pleaded with God to forgive altogether the great

sin of the people. He even asks God to erase his own honoured name from the number of the living, if He would not forgive and preserve the entire people. Earnest however as this prayer was, God did not, to the fulness of its letter, comply with it; and therefore He says, verses 33 and 34, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me" (filling the cup of his iniquity to its brim), "him will I blot out of My book. Therefore now go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to thee: behold, Mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them." It is then added, verse 35, "And the Lord plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made."

Afterward, as we learn from the commencement of chap. xxxiii., Moses went again to plead with God in behalf of the people. God reiterated His former declaration; and, as we learn from the first three verses, commanded Moses to lead up the people; "and," says He, "I will send an angel before thee. . . . For I will not go up in the midst of thee" (probably in the pillar of cloud and fire); "for thou art a stiff-necked people: lest I consume thee." He promised the presence of a guardian and guiding angel, but threatened to remove from them His own gracious and glorious presence. Therefore Moses said to the Lord (ver. 12, 13), "See, Thou sayest

to me, Bring up this people : and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, *I know thee by name*, and *thou hast found grace (or favour) in My sight*. Now therefore, I pray Thee, show me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight : and consider that this nation is Thy people.” Then the Lord, we are told, (ver. 14, 17), “was entreated of Moses,” and “He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.” “I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found favour in My sight, and I know thee by name.” It was immediately after this gracious reply to his prayer for God’s presence to be continued among the people that Moses, with the view of obtaining a sign of the fulfilment of the promised blessing, said (ver. 18), “I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory”—(*give me an unclouded view of the ineffably lustrous but ever-shaded symbol of Thy Presence*). And it was in answer to this request that God replied (ver. 19), “I will make all My goodness pass before thee (by way of proclamation), and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee, and *I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy*.” It is subsequently added that, though it was not possible for any mortal to behold the unclouded lustre of the glory in which God (symbolically) dwelt, yet He did descend in

the cloud, and passed by before Moses, and proclaimed Himself by name as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but that will by no means clear the guilty (*or*, but that will by no means absolutely forgive), visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation."

Such are the circumstances in which the declaration, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," was made. Moses had desired that all the people should be forgiven. God however would not promise to grant this request. He graciously complied with many of that "mediator's" petitions, and vouchsafed to the Jews, in accordance with these intercessions, inestimable favours, such as respite from destruction, and the blessing of His Presence among them to lead them. But a general and absolute amnesty He refused to bestow. On the contrary, He declared that "whosoever had sinned against Him (and still persisted in defiance and impenitence), him would He blot out of His book." He would not absolutely forgive. It was in vindication, as it would appear, of such a refusal to bestow a general forgiveness upon the stiff-necked and unbelieving people that the Lord proclaimed before Moses that "*He would have*

*mercy on whom He would have mercy, and would have compassion on whom He would have compassion."*

This declaration of God to Moses, though unquestionably involving a great principle, which is applicable to God's dealings with all sinners, was made, not concerning the Gentiles, or the world of men at large, but concerning the Jews. Moses could have no thought of any others, when the declaration was made. It therefore amounts to this: "I will have mercy on whomsoever of the Jews I will have mercy, and I will have have compassion on whomsoever of the Jews I will have compassion."

When the apostle contends that his unbelieving countrymen were exposing themselves to retributive penalty, he simply means that they were in a condition in which, if they persisted, God would not extend to them the "forgiveness" which He claims a liberty to withhold from whomsoever He chooses. Though even Moses pleaded for them, they could not enjoy God's pardoning favour. Their condition demanded the anathema and wrath of a righteous God. This being the case, the passage which the apostle adduces from the Pentateuch is remarkably apposite and appropriate; and so far was it from being true that the apostle's doctrine regarding his countrymen was inconsistent with the righteousness of God, that the very Jewish

Scriptures themselves, which confessedly guard and glorify God's righteousness, attribute to Him the identical principle of procedure, and that expressly in reference to the Israelites, for which the apostle contends. Truly entitled was the apostle then, putting his twofold question, to ask, *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?* And truly entitled was he to exclaim in reply, *Far be it!* For, continues the apostle, *He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

The expression rendered in our Public Version, *I will have mercy* (ἐλεήσω), would be better and more literally rendered, *I shall have mercy*. It simply expresses futurity; and it implies that the objects of the futresent mercy were in woful plight.

The parallel expression in the second clause of the oracle, *I will have compassion*, should of course be congruously rendered, *I shall have compassion*. It presents the idea of the preceding verb in a somewhat intensified light. The word means to be *commiseratingly gracious*; as it were, kind and compassionate even to the utterance of wail or the shedding of tears. The term is intimately connected with οἶκτος, which properly denotes *the expression of pity*, such as *lamentation* or *piteous wailing*.

Both of the expressions, *I shall have mercy* and



*I shall have compassion*, evidently refer to such mercy and compassion as are manifested in the bestowment of *forgiveness*. Compare 1 Timothy i. 13, where we read, “but *I obtained mercy*, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.” There is apparently the same reference in Hebrews iv. 16: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain *mercy*, and find grace to help in time of need.” Again, the same reference is manifestly involved in four successive instances in which the word occurs in Romans xi. 30–32: “For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now *obtained mercy* through their unbelief; even so have these also now not believed, that through your *mercy* they also *may obtain mercy*. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He *might have mercy* upon all.” When we consider the twenty-third verse of this chapter, and observe that the expression, “vessels of *mercy*,” is used in contrast to “vessels of *wrath*,” is it not evident that, as the “vessels of *wrath*” denote “those who are exposed to the punishment due to their sins,” so the “vessels of *mercy*” will “denote those who are blessed to enjoy the forgiveness of their iniquities”? “By *vessels of mercy*,” says John Goodwin, “it is out of question that he meaneth such persons who . . . obtain *mercy*, that great *mercy*, forgiveness of sins, with the fruits and consequents of it” (*Exposition*, p. 306). Now



there is an intimate connexion between that expression and this verse we are considering; and the intimate nature of the connexion between them is of itself a sufficient reason why we should conclude that the "mercy" and "compassion" here spoken of are the commiserating favour which is manifested in the bestowment of *forgiveness*. When moreover we consider the scope of the apostle's argument throughout that part of the chapter already expounded, and remember that he is proving that it would not be unjust in God to punish the unbelieving Israelites, that is, to deny them the blessing of forgiveness; and when, more particularly, we consider the quoted passage as it stands in its original form in Exodus, and remember that it was a general *pardon* which Moses implored, but which God refused, we cannot resist the conclusion that, when the apostle repeats the twofold statement of Jehovah, "I shall have mercy" and "I shall have compassion," he looked upon the "mercy" referred to as being *forgiving mercy*, and the "compassion" specified as *pardoning compassion*.

Note now the secondary expression in the parallelism, that rendered in our public version, *on whom I will have mercy* (ὅν ἂν ἐλεῶ). The translation is practically sufficient; only the influence of the particle ἂν on the relative pronoun is such that, instead of the simple pronoun *whom*, we should substitute the complex *whomsoever*. Com-

pare the translation of the same mode of expression, or of the kindred *ὅς ἐάν*, in the first gospel, viz. in chap. v. 19, 21, 22, 31, 32; x. 11; xii. 32; xvi. 25; xviii. 6; xix. 9; xxi. 44; xxiii. 16, 18; xxvi. 48, which are all the passages in the *Gospel of Matthew*, in which *ὅς ἂν* or *ὅς ἐάν* occurs. Compare also the uniform translation of the expression throughout the rest of the New Testament. In John i. 33, Acts vii. 3, Gal. v. 17 we have in our Public Version the same insufficiency of rendering as in Romans ix. 15. The illustrious Valla had good ground for his note, when he remarked that the apostle's idea is not so much expressed by *whom* as by *whomsoever* ("nec tam est *cujus* quam *cujuscumque*").

The parallel clause (*ὅν ἂν οἰκτείρω*) is of course to be rendered as an exact echo of the corresponding clause in the first branch of the parallelism. The entire parallelistic oracle is rendered thus in our Public English Version :

“ *I will have mercy*  
*on whom I will have mercy ;*  
*and I will have compassion*  
*on whom I will have compassion.”*

That of the Revisionists runs thus :

“ *I will have mercy*  
*on whom I have mercy ;*  
*and I will have compassion*  
*on whom I have compassion.”*

Both translations are somewhat marred by the

presence of the pronoun *whom* in place of *whomsoever*; and by the presence in the primary parallels of the auxiliary *will*, in its archaic acceptation, in place of *shall*. But, apart from these imperfections, the variations in the two modes of translation are, when broadly considered, mutually consistent and complementive. In the Old Version, modified by the substitution of *shall* for *will* and of *whomsoever* for *whom*, the emphasis requires to be laid lightly on the first pair of parallels :

“*I shall have mercy.*”

“*I shall have compassion.*”

And heavily on the second pair :

“*On whomsoever I will have mercy.*”

“*On whomsoever I will have compassion.*”

The *will* here specified and signalised is not the *will* of *futurition*, but the *will* of *determination*. The two wills would, in actual fact, be present in the original enunciation of the Divine oracle.

But the second and dependent parallels vary, in the Revised Version, from the form under which they appeared in the old translation. They now run thus :

“*On whom I have mercy.*”

“*On whom I have compassion.*”

The explicit reference to *will*, so far as the secondary parallels are concerned, is merged. And correctly so, as regards formal expression and grammatical construction. But there would,

on the other hand, be a logical blunder of conception, if the implicit reference to the *will of determination* were not recognised. The new translation in the Revised Version is right philologically. The old translation is right logically.

The translation in the Revised Version has been drawn out on Tyndale's lines, which run thus : *I will shewe mercy to whom I shewe mercy ; and will have compassion on whom I have compassion.* The Geneva version was intermediate in time between Tyndale's and the Authorized, and runs thus, more theologically than Tyndale's : *I will have mercie on him, to whom I will shewe mercie : and will have compassion on him, on whom I will have compassion.* Wycliffe's version is superior to both ; *I schal haue merci on whom I haue merci ; and I schal gyve merci on whom I shall haue merci.* There is too much appearance of truistic representation in Luther's version, which was reproduced in the translation of Myles Coverdale : *I shewe mercy te whom I shewe mercy ; and have compassion on whom I have compassion.* The absence of the future element in the first pair of parallels is a real defect in Luther's translation, as is evidenced by the future verbs given by the Septuagint translator, and accepted by the apostle, as also by the strongly futurescing verbs of the Hebrew original.

The version of the Vulgate is characterized by freedom and variety, *I shall pity whom I pity,*

*and show compassion to him whom I shall pity.* (“Miserebor cujus misereor, et misericordiam præstabo cujus miserebor.”)

Whichsoever of the various translations may be made use of, through which to explore the Divine idea embodied in the oracle, it seems to be indisputable that the language employed was intended to convey the idea that God, in His relation to the Jews, no less than in His relation to the Gentiles, is an absolute sovereign in the dispensation of His forgiving grace.

It is because God is such a sovereign that He may beseeingly say of Himself, in the spirit of high prerogative, *I shall have mercy on whomsoever I have mercy, and I shall have compassion on whomsoever I have compassion.*

When it is affirmed that the sovereignty of God is absolute, it is simply meant that He is a Being who *can* do whatever He pleases. “None *can* stay His hand, or say to Him, What doest Thou?” He is not accountable for His deeds to any superior. “He giveth not account of any of His matters.” But, as He *can* do whatever He pleases, so He *will* fulfil His pleasure. He actually “does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.” “My counsel,” says He, “shall stand; I will do all My pleasure.”

But while God is thus an absolute Sovereign, and can do, and will do, whatever He pleases to

do, His absolute sovereignty does not determine for Him what it is right that He should please to do. Something else than His peerless sovereignty is needed for that. His peerless intelligence is indispensable. In it, and in it alone, does God find the idea of right, an idea without which there could be no ethical imperative, uttering itself in the affirmative "I ought." It is the highest glory of God that He should always please, and that He does always please, to do only what is right. In Him is no darkness at all. He exercises His sovereignty in doing only what is "holy, just, and good." His sovereignty is itself "holy, just, and good."

The apostle's adduction of the oracle addressed to Moses is a decided argumentative success. Men without exception are the subjects of God's sovereign sway. It cannot be disputed. So therefore are the Jews in particular: universally so. And yet all have "come short of the glory of God"; so that there is, unless there supervene some great change or new creation, there is overhanging all, both Gentiles and Jews, a lurid thundercloud of doom. Is there room for hope? The asseverations, *I shall have mercy, I shall have compassion*, seem to assume that there is forgiveness with God, that He may be had in reverence. (Ps. cxxx. 4.)

But there are limits to His pardoning grace. He "keeps mercy indeed for thousands." (Exod.



xxxiv. 7.) But He will “by no means” clear those whose guilt has deepened and darkened into utter impenitence and defiance. There is a sin “that hath never forgiveness.” (Mark iii. 29.)

Who then shall be pardoned? Just those whom it pleases God to pardon. *He will have pardoning mercy on whomsoever He is having pardoning mercy; He will have pardoning compassion on whomsoever He is having pardoning compassion.*

And who are these? Under the Old Testament dispensation, the category of the pardonable was not clearly revealed. But under the clearer light of the New Testament none need to walk in the darkness of uncertainty. As regards the ultimate condition of those who enjoy the privilege of a verbal and historic revelation, he who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, or he who puts his trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be pardoned.

And as regards the others who, by no fault of their own, are destitute of the historic and verbal revelation, “these, having not the Bible, are a Bible to themselves, who show the work of the Bible (the work inculcated in the Bible), written in their hearts.” (Rom. ii. 13-15.) Their responsibility is measured by their ability and opportunity. And it lies entirely with God’s sovereignty to determine who shall be the recipients of His bounty.



In the statements *on whomsoever I have mercy, or on whomsoever I am having mercy, on whomsoever I am having compassion, or, on whomsoever I do have mercy and compassion*, in these statements there seems to be the conveyance of an idea to the effect that God, at the time when He uttered His oracle, was already in absolute spontaneity at work, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin.

This favourite work of Divine grace, however, is so great, august, and far-reaching in its ethical influence, that none but the Highest of the high could reasonably undertake it, or, having undertaken it, could carry it through to a satisfactory issue. "There is none who can forgive sins, but God only." There is hence, on the part of God, the well-grounded assumption of a very lofty prerogative, which assumption is tantamount to an assertion to the effect, that He will not suffer any one, not even Moses, to interfere with the administration of His bounty. He is resolved to dispense His bounty to whomsoever He pleases.

Ver. 16. Our public English Version renders the sixteenth verse thus: *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*

Tyndale's version, of both dates, was not so

literal. It runs thus: *So lieth it not then in a man's will, or running, butt in the mercy of God.* He had looked into his Luther, as so often on other occasions, before he put his own translation upon paper. Wycliffe's version bears indelible marks of its antiquity: *Threfor it is not nether of man willing, nether renning, but of God having merci.* The Rheims, though outlined from the same Vulgate which served as copy for Wycliffe, has its own peculiarity: *Therefore it is not of the willer, nor the runner, but of God that sheweth mercie.* The Geneva of 1557 thrust in a rather peculiar supplement: *So lieth "election" then, not in him that willeth, or runneth, but in God that pitieth.* This doctrinal supplement was wisely dropped in the succeeding edition of the version.

There are rhetorical rifts, or gaps, in the apostle's phraseology; but for that very reason it is singularly forceful and emphatic. Literally it stands elliptically thus: *Therefore then, not of him who is wishing, nor of him who is running, but of God, who is pitying.*

The substantive verb is omitted. And there is the still more conspicuous omission of the thing, which might, in the presence of that verb, be either affirmed or denied. The reader has to vault, with the writer, over both the suppressed verb and the sunken substantive, if he would avoid a phraseological stumble, and

reach, on the other side, the apostle's logical and unassailable conclusion.

We have but to revert for a moment to the oracular statement quoted in the preceding verse, to see what it is which is *not of him who is wishing, nor of him who is running, but of God, who is pitiful and pitying*. It is manifestly God's pardoning pity, His pardoning compassion or mercy. His liberty to dispense the boon to whomsoever He pleases is His intransferable prerogative.

We may rest assured, indeed, that both in conferring and in withholding His inestimably valuable bounty, He will never feel the least temptation to act capriciously, unwisely, or unrighteously. The Judge of all the earth is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind." His name is Love, His nature too. Never, in any of His plans, or purposes, or merciful invitations, or in His threatenings, or in His pains and penalties, will He act in a spirit that is antagonistic to, or inconsistent with, the grand ground-principle of universal benevolence. But from the fact that God is represented in verse 15 as reserving the right of bestowing pardon on whomsoever He pleases, and the consequent correlative right of withholding it from whomsoever it seems good to Him, the apostle, in this sixteenth verse, infers that it is an axiom in true theology that "forgiving favour is not of him

who is wishing it, nor of him who runs, or is running, for it, but of God, who has compassion, or is taking compassion."

The peculiar compound expression (*ἄρα οὖν*) which is made use of by the apostle to announce his inference, is rendered in our public version *so then*, and might be rendered *therefore then* or *consequently then*. It is a "Paulism," not having been found in the writings of any other author, biblical or classical. It is emphatically a debater's phrase, and is, by a singular idiosyncrasy of the apostle's mind, pushed, here and elsewhere, to the front of his argumentative propositions.

The apostle's inference is more than a mere repetition or echo of the Divine oracle. In the oracle God announced to the Jewish "mediator" what He was resolved to do, and what, even at the very moment of annunciation He was already actually doing. He had been merciful in the past: He was continuing to be merciful in the present: He was resolved to be merciful in the future. The oracle was concrete throughout. There was in it a touch of the historical, and a touch too of the prophetic.

But in the logical hands of the apostle, this same concrete oracle becomes transformed into an abstract theological principle,—an axiom of universal applicability in all dispensations of grace. As the oracle stands in Exodus xxxiii. 19,

there is no express negation in it. No limits of any description are, by any mode of assertion, expressly affirmed. The perspicacious apostle, however, saw that in the heart of the oracle there is what is tantamount to an assertion of high and absolute sovereignty. And he likewise saw, that in this involved assertion it is implied that He who has the absolute prerogative and right to confer forgiving favour as he pleases, must have the same absolute right and title to withhold it whensoever He pleases, and from whomsoever He pleases. God's sovereignty is not merely, as Dr. Edward Williams and Dr. George Payne contended, a right to confer favours; it is likewise and equally a right to withhold them. God's sovereignty, in its essence and in all its outgoings, is *supremacy*. It is that peculiar and peerless relationship of God to His creatures, which renders it a fitting thing that His will, in reference to each of them, should be supreme.

While the reality of the Divine sovereignty has equal reference to the bestowment and to the withholding of favour, the apostle in this inferential verse has occasion to specify the former only. He hence speaks of *the pitying or compassionating God*. The expression carries in its bosom a reference to the *compassion* or *mercy* which God, in speaking with Moses, claimed for Himself, and ascribed to Himself, as His peculiar

prerogative. We would not have found in the apostle's inference the word *pitying* or *compassionating*, had not the apostle found, in the claim put forth by God, when He talked with Moses, that pardon was contemplated and intended. The participial expression, *the pitying God*, brings prominently into view,—so far as the Divine relationship to sinners is concerned—an attributive which is pre-eminently characteristic and attractive. It stands in sublime contrast to the characteristics of the two supposable classes of individuals who are ruled out of court in the apostle's antithetic inference. There is, first, the class of those *who wish* or *are wishing*; and then, secondly, the class of those *who run*, or *are running*.

The apostle says that the Divine compassion is not *of him who is wishing (it)*. There is nothing wrong, indeed, in wishing the boon. Contrariwise, it is only natural that it should be desired, and that too with intensity of desire. It would be most unnatural, were the boon, instead of being wished or prized, to be swinishly spurned and trampled in the mire. Still it is *not of him who is wishing (for it)*. It did not originate with him. It never was his in any other way, or in any other sense, than as a gift from another. He never could say, in reference to it, "It is mine, to do with as I choose; mine, to give to whom I choose; mine, to grant it to myself, if I choose."



Pardoning mercy is not the property or the proprietary possession of him who wishes to enjoy it. It cannot so belong to him that he may dispose of it according to his pleasure.

Neither is it the property of *him who runs* (for it). No amount of effort and exertion could entitle any one on earth to lay hold of it as a thing that has been earned by merit. It is mercy, not justice, of which the apostle speaks, and of which the pitying and forgiving God spoke to Moses.

It is worthy of note that the apostle, while bringing into view his weighty theological inference, throws upon his ideas a picturesque drapery of costume. *Him who is wishing, him who is running! Him whose characteristic it is that he is wishing! Him whose characteristic it is that he is running!* Pardoning mercy belongs neither to the one nor to the other. Of course not. But does it not seem likely, nevertheless, that there was a rhetorical gleam of phraseological reference to the *desire* of Rebekah and Jacob, who wished to secure the patriarch's principal blessing? Or, may there not be a glancing reference to Isaac's personal predilections and desire in the interest of Esau? If so, then undoubtedly there will be, in the expression *him who runneth*, an allusion to the running of Esau. It is possible certainly, and indeed by no means improbable, that there is in the apostle's representation a pictorial element, founded on the facts of patriarchal history. Such

facts might naturally suggest themselves to the apostle's mind, inasmuch as he had, in the immediately preceding context, namely in verses 10, 11, 12, 13, been dealing with those affairs of Isaac's household that were mixed up with solitudes of *wishing*, on the one hand, and with nimble and strenuous *running*, on the other. Theophylact and many other expositors have thought it likely that there is this allusion. But if there be, as it is probable that there is, it must still be carefully borne in mind that the reference is merely literary or rhetorical, and consists only of a passing gleam or glance of representation.

The dual expression, *Him who desireth and him who runneth*, must be explained, independently of the literary allusion, as simply denoting him, on the one hand, who has *bonâ fide* desires, and him, on the other, who makes real and earnest effort to obtain the blessing.

Ver. 17. *For the Scripture* (in Exod. ix. 16) *says to Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee My power, and that My name might be published abroad in all the earth.*

The reason-rendering conjunction at the commencement of this verse demands special consideration. It introduces a reason, not for the idea that is expressly stated in what goes im-

mediately before, but for an idea that is incidentally implied. As God possesses the prerogative of conferring His forgiving favour on whomsoever He pleases, so He has the right to withhold that favour from whomsoever He chooses. This latter statement is the idea that is implied. God can, indeed, have no right to do wrong. He claims no such liberty. It is even the case that He can have no right to withhold, in a "wrongous" or "wrongful" way, or in a capricious and selfish spirit, any blessing whatsoever, inclusive of forgiving favour. Creatures who are held, on the part of the great moral Governor, to be accountable to Him for their conduct, must be in possession of rights, as truly as their Creator. And these rights, being emanations of His own infinite righteousness, He will assuredly ever recognise and honour. We need not fear then, or falter, when facing the formidable contents of this seventeenth verse. Undoubtedly they are entirely right, and may by us be seen to be righteous.

The introductory "*for*" introduces the dark alternative that is free to God in the matter of His forgiving favour.

*The Scripture says to Pharaoh.* It is a somewhat complicated mode of representation, but perfectly pellucid in its import. It was, of course, not literally the Scripture that spoke to Pharaoh. It was God. But as the apostle looked upon the entire Scripture as being, in its entirety, the voice

of God to men, he could, in the free and popular mould of his representation, ascribe to the written word what, in strictness of speech, was attributable only to the spoken word of the living God. It is a bold but not unwarrantable personification.

“The Scripture *says*.” Note the present tense. The apostle might have put the case thus: “The Scripture *said*.” But he does not. The personified Scripture is not in its utterances, a mere thing of the past. It would be nearer the mark to say that there is an element of timelessness in the utterance. If the Scripture ever spoke at all, it continued and continues to speak. It has never been struck dumb.

It speaks *to Pharaoh*, the high autocrat of Egypt; and it speaks in no faltering tone. The particular Pharaoh addressed was a “king who knew not Joseph,” and who wantonly made himself the tyrant and the oppressor of the Israelites. He must have been a man of a lofty, imperious spirit. But a greater than he was at work around him, upon him, within him. Despite his defiance and impenitence, he was impelled by opposing forces from stage to stage, until, by his own consummate wickedness and folly, he was engulfed in utter ruin.

*For this very purpose did I raise thee up* (ἐξήγειρά σε). The nature of *this raising up* has been much and vehemently debated by doctrinal commentators. Some have supposed that the

idea is, *I raised thee up to the throne of Egypt*. Such was the interpretation of Theodoret of old, and of Bengel in modern times (*zum König gemacht*). It is by no means a probable interpretation; for the term has no special fitness to denote *exaltation* in general, or *exaltation to royal dignity* in particular. *Raising*, in the sense of *rousing*, is the natural significance of the term.

But this idea of *rousing* must not be inflated or accentuated, as is done by some expositors, who interpret the apostle's expression as meaning *I have incited thee*, or *stirred thee up, to oppose Me*. This was the conception of Wycliffe (*stirid thee*) and Tyndale (*I stered thee up*), and the authors of the English Geneva Version (*also I stered thee up*), and, in later times, of Fritzsche. It is not required philologically, and it is somewhat offensive theologically.

There are two other conspicuous interpretations. The one is *I preserved thee alive under the plague of "boil breaking forth with blains," and raised thee up from thy sick-bed*. The other is, *I raised thee up among the children of men, and thus brought thee forth on the stage of the world*. The former interpretation was the one advocated in the 1849 edition of this *Exposition*. The Septuagint translator had taken the same view. His version—free and easy in form—is, *For this purpose wert thou preserved* (διετηρίθης). A multi-

tude of interpreters have espoused this interpretation. But I feel now disposed, at the instance and in the interest of scientific exegesis, to accept the other. It is given by Theophylact, by Beza likewise, and by Gomarus of Synod of Dort celebrity; by Meyer too, and Godet, and many others, both of the older and of the more recent interpreters. The original Hebrew phrase, though not so pronounced in its pictorial import as either version, will, with almost equal facility, bear either interpretation. (הָעֲמִידָה, caused *thee to stand*.)

It is an objection to the Septuagint interpretation that there is no specific mention in Exodus of any particular illness or sickness under which the defiant monarch was himself laid low. The verb employed by the apostle to reproduce the force of the Hebrew word used in the Pentateuch is suitable indeed to denote *restoration to health* (see Epistle of James v. 15, and Isa. xxxviii. 16). But as nothing is recorded to show that the guilty king had been personally afflicted to the jeopardy of his life, or even to the serious inconvenience of his person in the discharge of the high duties of his station, the aorist tense of the verb employed by the apostle (*I raised thee up*, not *I have raised thee up*) seems scarcely accounted for. The apostle, it should be borne in mind, drew his representation from the very annals in the Pentateuch of which we are in



possession. And yet there is no record in these annals of such a definite occurrence in the experience of the monarch, as, on the hypothesis of the Septuagint translator, we might be led to expect.

We turn therefore to Theophylact's interpretation, concerning which I wrote in 1849: "It does not seem indeed to be, theologically considered, an utterly objectionable opinion. I can easily imagine that it might be shown that there is nothing inconsistent with the holiness and mercy of God, in supposing that He raised up Pharaoh into being, and brought him forward in the world, that He might show *to* him and *in* him His Divine power, and that His glorious name might be declared throughout all the earth." (*Exposition*, p. 314.)

The apostle's verb, in Theophylact's acceptation of its import, is found in the Septuagint version of Zechariah xi. 16: "For, lo, *I raise up* a shepherd against the land." In the Gospel according to Matthew xi. 11, the uncompounded verb is used with a similar application, "Among them that are born of women there *hath not been raised up* (ἐγέρχεται) a greater than John the Baptist." Harmoniously therewith we read in the Gospel according to John vii. 52, "Search, and see that out of Galilee *arise*th no prophet," or, "no prophet *is raised up*" (ἐγείρεται).

In this sense was Pharaoh "raised up." He

made his appearance in the world. God said *Let him be! And he was.* He became a man and a monarch.

He had a place in the Divine plan. God said to him, "For this very purpose did I raise thee up, *that I might display in thee My power.*" In those idolatrous days the minds of thoughtful men were perplexed by the "gods many" that were worshipped in the separate circles of earth's various nationalities. Less considerate minds assumed the reality of those traditional deities whom they had received from their infancy, and they were ready to do battle for the objects of their adoration. Pharaoh scorned the authority of the God of his Hebrew slaves. "Who is JAHVEH, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I know not JAHVEH; neither will I let Israel go." (Exod. v. 2.) A conflict ensued between JAHVEH's longsuffering grace and Pharaoh's persistent impenitence and obstinacy. JAHVEH appealed to various demonstrations of His peerless power. It was the kind of proof that was the readiest for argument, and the most adapted at once to the spirit of the age and to the spirit of the Egyptian tyrant. It requires, in some measure, a wise mind to appreciate exhibitions of wisdom, and a benevolent heart to appreciate exhibitions of benevolence. But it requires little more, than a capacity to be stricken with terror or awe, to appreciate exhibitions of astounding

power, more especially when these come home to one's own person, or substance, or subjects, or friends. Pharaoh was compelled, time after time, to pause and reflect, so vivid were the gleams of light, self-evidencingly emitted in his presence. But the haughty, self-sufficient man continued unsubdued. His spirit was up-borne, and onward-borne, by the wilful determination of a truly imperious and autocratic will.

Time after time, and many times, the Lord gave to the wilful man opportunities and inducements for repentance. But in vain. And hence there was necessity for having recourse to the principle of penal retribution. Meanwhile the Divine wail over opportunities unimproved went forth, "I would; but ye would not."

The voice of retribution, in the first mutters of its thunder, is heard in the words, "that I may display *in thee* My power." The finger of the Divine intention is pointing ultimately to the scene that was enacted in the bed of the Red Sea, when "the Lord triumphed gloriously, and the horse and his rider were overthrown in the sea." (Exod. xv.) "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto Thee, O Jahveh, among the gods? Who is

like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. xv. 9-11.) Thus Jahveh manifested His peerless power in dealing with the infatuated Pharaoh.

But there is a singular peculiarity in the Hebrew expression that is rendered in the Septuagint, "that I might show *in thee* My might." There is no preposition corresponding to *in*. Instead of *in thee*, it is simply *thee*. The expression in Hebrew runs thus: "that I might *show thee* My power." It conveys, we presume, the idea of mercifulness. And the mercifulness goes before the penal retribution. The recourse to retribution is an alternative, to be reluctantly resorted to only in the sad event of the mercy being spurned. It is not a case of unconditional and inevitable reprobation. The Septuagint translator used liberty with the Hebrew expression. But as the liberty he took was in harmony with the acknowledged principles of the Divine moral government, the apostle held himself justified in availing himself of the Septuagint variation, as peculiarly appropriate, though by no means indispensable to the argument he had in hand. The display of peerless power was, in the first place, for the instruction of Pharaoh; and it was only when that instruction was declined and haughtily repelled, that the Lord turned to the dread alternative. The alternative runs onward thus: "*And that My name might be published in all*

*the earth,"* that is, "*and, failing thy repentance, that My name might be published in all the earth*" (by means of thy terrific destruction, and the engulfing of thy host in the waters of the Red Sea). The intervenience of latent conditional clauses, in both promises and threatenings, is of common occurrence. When we read, for example, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, *and thou shalt be saved,*" there is a latent condition in the promise, "And *if thou persevere to the end in thy faith,* thou shalt be saved." In the reverse threat, "He that believeth not shall be condemned," there is a corresponding intervenience of latent conditionality. "He that believeth not, and persisteth in his *unbelief to the end of his probation,* he, though he only, shall be condemned."

Jonah's message to the Ninevites is a case in point. "Yet forty days, and (*failing the repentance of the Ninevites*) Nineveh shall be overthrown." It is on the same principle that we are to interpret God's solemn warning to Pharaoh. In the Hebrew representation, the threat, with its enwrapped conditionality, has its incidence in the last clause only of the statement made to the stubborn monarch: "In very deed I raised thee up, that I might *show thee My power* (and the other involved perfections of My infinite glory), and, *failing thine improvement of this instruction,* that by the overthrow and destruction of thyself and

thy host, with all thy pomp of array, My name may be magnified, all the world over, above all the gods of the nations." In the Septuagint version, which was accepted by the apostle, the incidence of the threat extended to both clauses of the Divine statement, thus: "I raised thee up that—*failing thy penitence—I might show, in My retributive dealings with thee, My Divine power, and that My name and fame may be published abroad in all the earth.*"

Ver. 18. *Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.*

The single *therefore* does scant justice to the apostle's complex illative (ἀρα οὖν). The phrase is rendered *so then* in the sixteenth verse. It might be translated *therefore then* or *consequently then*. Since God is not baffled by men's infatuation, but can turn to account, in His universe, even obdurately impenitent Pharaohs, we may rest assured that in the great moral alternative *He will either pardon or harden*. Whom He pleases to pardon, them He will pardon; and whom He pleases to harden, them He will harden. The Divine treatment of Pharaoh was a case in point. God had a right to warn the haughty monarch; and He did warn him, again and again. When His warnings were unheeded, He had a



right to menace the defiant man. Again and again He did menace him. And when His threats, like His warnings, were time after time repeated, and yet in the long run invariably unheeded, surely the long-suffering One had a right to execute them in befitting doom, and to make use of all legitimate means to render the judicial sentence effective!

In the Revised Version the first clause of the inferential verse runs thus: "So then He hath mercy on whom He will." The English expression, *on whom He will*, is fitted to bring out prominently to view a volitional idea: so that the expression seems to mean, *on whom He chooses*, or *on whom He pleases*, viz. to have mercy. But this volitional idea is not quite so prominent in the apostle's Greek. It is *wish* rather than *will* that is expressed. The same verb (*θέλει*) is used in 2 Corinthians xi. 12, "them which *desire* occasion"; xi. 32, "*desirous* to apprehend me"; xii. 6, "though I *would desire* to glory"; Gal. iv. 9, "ye *desire* again to be in bondage"; vi. 12, "as many as *desire* to make a fair show"; iv. 20, "I could *desire* to be present with you." *God*, says the apostle, *has mercy on whom He "desires" to have mercy*. It is *His wish*, *His desire*, that is—in the matter of mercy—to be considered and consulted. The mercy referred to is, as in verses 15 and 16, *pardoning mercy*.

The great alternative in the Divine sovereignty

is expressed thus: *And whom He desires, He hardens.*

There is a sphere of things in which God does not desire to have any recourse to this dread and dark alternative. He "desires the salvation of all." (1 Tim. ii. 4.) He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 9.) In that sphere judgment is "His strange act." It would be, and it was, in accordance with the strongest feelings of His nature to leave no legitimate expedient unemployed to win the hearts of the unholy from the pursuit and love of unholiness. He would gladly do everything but break down into shivers our moral nature, with its inter-involved free will, to get iniquity degraded in His universe and hunted down, if needed, into everlasting disgrace, from world to world. But when creatures rise up into defiance of His will, and thus into determination to have their own wild will, even when it is utterly wrong, could it be the case that He Himself would be their true lover and the true patron of what is right and good and morally beautiful and true if He did not desire, as Ruler of the universe, to use every lawful weapon to put down the evil? There are assuredly circumstances and relationships which make it right for God to desire to brand with His broadest stigma persisted-in iniquity.

The apostle speaks of "hardness," manifestly

because his mind had been brooding over the career of *the bad Pharaoh*. He bore in mind that, in the book of Exodus, much is said of the moral induration of the guilty monarch's heart.

It was induration that fitly issued in the catastrophe that so signally manifested the power of God, and published His name and fame far and wide.

Some have supposed that, in seeking to understand the induration referred to, we should avail ourselves of a permissive element in our conception. God, it is supposed, did not by any agency of His own indurate the monarch's heart; He merely permitted the monarch to do the indurating himself. He "left" the monarch to the hardness of his heart. Such is, in substance, the interpretation of Œcumenius, Melancthon, Castellio, Grotius, A. Turretin, Wesley, Terrot. But it breaks down entirely the moment we consider that class of passages in which it is said that the defiant autocrat himself hardened his own heart. If moreover the permissive principle be applied to the interpretation of the second clause of the verse, then it must not be withheld from the interpretation of the antithetic clause in the first member of the verse. That clause consequently would have to run thus: "Whom He desires *He permits to have mercy*." It is an impossible interpretation.

Some rather brilliant critics, though yet only

lesser lights, interpret the hardness referred to as *hardness in "dealing,"* harshness as it were. God treated Pharaoh *with severity*. So does He, in the long run, treat all others who sin with high hand. Such is the intrepertation of Carpzov, Ernesti, Morus, Nösselt, Schleusner, Wahl (second edition), Bretschneider (second edition), Samuel Sharpe, etc. It is an impossible interpretation. It is nothing better than the meteoric sign of exegetical despair. What could be made of it when, like the permissive principle, applied to the passages in which the indurating action is ascribed to the monarch himself?

How then are we to interpret the induration? Some, inclusive of Origen, and Basil of Cæsarea, and Theophylact, as also of Borre, Goodwin, Loveday, Richard Baxter, and Bishop Womock (*Deus Justificatus*, 1668), have contended that the hardening referred to is an *unintentional process*. This interpretation proceeds on the principle that God, in all His indurative dealings with the monarch of Egypt, did nothing to him but what was gracious and merciful, and calculated to benefit and bless. It is thence concluded that it never was the intention of God to harden the man's heart. It is contended, on the contrary, that it was His single intention to melt and subdue it. But it is supposed that, while this was the intention of God, it was so perversely and pertinaciously crossed and frustrated by the madness of

the guilty man, that out of all the respite, and indulgent forbearance, and merciful miracles, by means of which God wished and meant to convey to him repenting grace, he extracted nothing but such security in sinning, and such determination in rebellion, that his heart became hardened into adamantine wickedness. The wasp of Egypt converted into the bitterness of poison what the God of love meant to be elaborated into the sweet honey of salvation.

But the terminology of the apostle proclaims intention, as really as in the antithetic clause. "Whom He desires to pardon, these," and these only, "He does pardon; and whom He desires to harden, these," and only these, "does He harden."

The language of the Old Testament account of the case seems steeped in the idea of intention. "I"—says the Lord (Exod. x. 1)—"I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, *that I might show these My signs before him, and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son* what things I have wrought in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am Jehovah" (*Jahveh*). It seems to be impossible to root out from these expressions the idea of intention; and hence absolutely impossible to interpret the indurating process referred to as *unintentional hardening*.

But what then ?

Let it be noted, in the first place, that it is the hardening of *the heart* that is spoken of. The apostle indeed does not mention the word *heart* ; but the manifest allusion of his statement to the narrative in Exodus makes it evident that it is nothing else that he thinks, so far as the object of the indurating process is concerned. Hence Tyndale translates the latter clause of verse 18 thus : “and whom He woll He maketh herde herted.” So the Geneva.

Note, in the second place, that it is possible to conceive of hardness of the heart as manifesting itself either in *stiff unyieldingness*, or in *callous insensibility*. But the nature of the historic case, nevertheless, as well as the scope of the passage quoted by the apostle, makes it probable that *insensibility* is the idea intended. Hardness, when predicated of the neck, most naturally denotes *stiffness* or *unyieldingness*, but when predicated of the heart, it seems most naturally to denote *insensibility*.

This insensibility,—let it be noted, in the third place,—might be predicated, either (1) in respect of *duty*,—*the duty of permitting the Israelites to depart out of Egypt* ; or (2) in respect of *danger*—*the danger that was impending over him for not permitting the Israelites to depart*. It is one specialty of hardness to be insensible to duty. It is another to be insensible to danger. The



two insensibilities may be often interwoven : still they are essentially distinct, perfectly separable in conception, often separate, and at all times presenting a totally different aspect to the view of the moralist. Insensibility to duty is a directly ethical condition of the soul. Insensibility to danger can be ethical only indirectly and by implication. It is a state of those feelings which we have in common with some of the inferior animals.

Which is the insensibility that was affirmed of Pharaoh ? Did the action of God upon the monarch's heart effect insensibility to the obligation under which he lay to let the Israelites depart ? Or did it effect insensibility to the dangers that were impending over him if he should refrain to let them go ? Or, did it effect, interblendingly, both of these insensibilities ?

Before determining the answer which should be given to this tripartite question, it may be noted, in the fourth place, that, whichever of the three ideas be affirmed, there can be no real theological difficulty in reference to the action of God upon the monarch's heart. This will appear evident when we present the case under a slight variation of aspect, and propound and press the consideration that there must have been certain specific effects, naturally and necessarily produced in the sensibilities of the Pharaoh's heart by that determined unbelief in view of which, and failing

his penitence, God purposed to take action penally, and thus to ripen for the fulness of doom.

It is psychologically impossible that such determined impenitence could be cherished by the monarch, and yet produce no effects in the sensibilities of his heart. Faith always works. And so does penitence. And so do unbelief and disbelief.

In such necessary working the hand of God must needs be immanent. When we impersonally say "must," and speak impersonally of "necessity," in reference to the conditions of the human sensibility, we either expressly or implicitly point to the operation of God. God did harden of old, and still He hardens when sin is cherished. There must be some efficient cause of the necessary effect, just as there must be some demeritorious cause or reason for the penal infliction.

Whatever view then be taken of the nature of the insensibility effected in the unbelieving monarch's heart, there is no theological difficulty in reference to the action of God in relation to it. God's hand was in the hardening, and must have been.

All the blame, indeed, of the hardness must be laid at the door of the guilty man himself. It was he, and he only, who furnished the *reason* why God hardened him. He and he alone, by means of his cherished impenitence and unbelief,

was the procuring and demeritorious cause of the hardness of his heart; and hence he is sometimes said to have *hardened his own heart*, just as believers are sometimes said to purify theirs. Nevertheless it was God who was the efficient cause of all that was penal in the case, and who, by being its efficient cause, vindicated His government over the monarch's soul, and manifested His displeasure at the obstinate impenitence by which that soul was characterised and stained, and turned into a moral nuisance.

There is then no real theological or philosophical difficulty as regards the penal action of God upon the Pharaoh's heart. Whether the induration spoken of was such a penal condition as consisted, on the one hand, of insensibility to the duty of permitting the Israelites to depart, or, on the other, of insensibility to the danger impending over him because of not permitting them, or, of the two insensibilities intertwined, there is no difficulty in supposing an actual penal hardening by the hand of God. Such an actual hardening must, on pure psychological principles, be maintained.

But there is a critical reason, and also some exegetical reasons why we give the preference to that interpretation of the hardness, which resolves it into penal insensibility to the danger that was impending over the defiant autocrat, for not permitting the Israelites to depart in peace.

The critical reason is this: There are three words in Hebrew employed to describe the hardness of the Pharaoh's heart. Of these three one (חִזְקָה) is employed only twice (Exod. vii. 3; xiii. 15); another (זָבַח) seven times (Exod. viii. 15, 32 (28); ix. 7, 34; x. 1; 1 Sam. vi. 6; see also Exod. vii. 14). The third (קִיָּץ) occurs twelve times (Exod. iv. 21; vii. 13, 22; viii. 19; ix. 12, 35; x. 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 4, 8, 17). Now the word that is employed twelve times is a term that naturally suggests *insensibility to danger*, for, in its intransitive form, it properly means *to be strong*, and is translated (in Josh. xxiii. 6; 2 Sam. x. 12, xiii. 28; 1 Chron. xix. 13; Ezra x. 4; Ps. xxvii. 14, xxxi. 24 (25); Isa. xli. 6) *to be of good courage, to be courageous*; while, in its transitive form, it properly means *to make strong*, and is actually translated (in Deut. i. 38, iii. 28; 2 Sam. xi. 25; 2 Chron. xxxv. 2; Ps. lxiv. 5 (6); Isa. xli. 7) *to encourage*. When such a term is used to denote penal induration, it is natural to suppose that the "hardness" will be somewhat allied to a spirit of *courage*, and consequently that it will consist of a kind of *dread-nought spirit*. There will be something of *hardiness* in it; indeed, some strong accentuation of *fool-hardiness*.

Besides the three terms that are employed to characterize the hardness of the Pharaoh's heart, there are other three that receive the same

translation in other parts of the Scriptures. Two of these (וַיַּזְק and וַיַּזְקֵם) properly mean *to be strong*, when used intransitively; and *to make strong*, when used transitively. And the term that occurs most frequently (וַיַּזְקֵם) is ten times translated *to be of good courage*, and twice *to be courageous*. There thus seems to be a somewhat weighty critical reason for considering the induration that was penally inflicted upon the unbelieving monarch's heart, as resolvable into *fool-hardy insensibility to the danger that was impending over him*.

The exegetical reasons, which go hand in hand with this critical reason, consist of the contents of the various passages in which the monarch's obduracy is spoken of. In none of these passages does there appear to be anything at variance with the idea that the hardness of his heart was infatuated hardness and insensibility to danger. All of them, indeed, are more easily explicable on the principle of this idea, than on the principle of any of the other theories of induration.

Look, for instance, at the representations in the fourteenth chapter of Exodus. "And the Lord spake to Moses, saying (ver. 2), Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the

land, the wilderness hath shut them in. *And I will harden Pharaoh's heart* (or, as Ainsworth translates it, *I will make strong the heart of Pharaoh*), *that he shall follow after them*; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord. And they did so. And it was told the king of Egypt that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was turned against the people, and they said, Why have we done this, *that we have let Israel go from serving us?* And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him: and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. *And (thus) the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with a high hand."* Again the Lord said to Moses, "Lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. *And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them*: and I will get Me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen." (Vers. 16, 17.) Here again there is the spectacle of remarkable insensibility to the peril of pursuing the Israelites. The Pharaoh was infatuated. He was intoxicated with his own high



sufficiency. A penal blight had fallen on his reason. He was penally blinded. Rushing onward in daring recklessness, he and his chivalry were penally swept into destruction. And thus the Lord, by inflicting on them, first, the most insensitive obduracy,<sup>1</sup> and, secondly, the most tragical termination of their career, got Him honour upon Pharaoh and upon all his host. "Pharaoh," says Fry, in his *Lectures Explanatory on Romans*, "had not, in immediate consequence of his *hardiness* or obduracy, any more sinfulness in his heart than he had previously; but he *dared to do more*." (P. 387.)

In selecting the word *hardens* to denote the penal deterioration in character of the persistently impenitent, the apostle suggests a parallel between Pharaoh, on the one hand, and the Israelites, on the other. There was something ominously Pharaonic in the spirit of the unbelieving Jews.

Ver. 19. *Thou wilt say to me then, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His pleasure?*

The apostle still, as throughout the entire chapter, makes reference to his countrymen; but

<sup>1</sup> Borre says well: "Indurari proprie idem valet quod audacem, animosum, pertinacem, et imperterritum fieri." (*Expl. Dil.*, p. 146.)

here he widens for a little the incidence of the queries that are proposed. When he singles out a representative antagonist, and says to him, "*Thou wilt say to me then,*" he has indeed in his eye a Jewish objector. But this Jewish objector wears a veil over his Judaism, so that, if not carefully scrutinised, he bears the aspect rather of a man generically considered than of a Jew. He speaks out against the apostle's teaching, not from the standpoint or platform of Israelitish peculiarities, but from the higher platform and vantage ground of those great ethical principles that are of world-wide applicability and significance.

The first clause of the verse, that which links on the objector's queries to the preceding context, may be read either affirmatively, *Thou wilt say to me then*, or interrogatively, *Wilt thou say to me then?* The difference in the Greek of the two modes of reading is nothing more than a slight modification of intoning. The affirmative intoning is on the whole the more likely mode, *Thou wilt doubtless then be saying to me*. But in our English idiom the interrogative element may be recognised, in a state of semi-latency, *Thou wilt doubtless then be saying to me (wilt thou not?)*

*Why yet does He find fault?* Why does He, who is the hardening God, find fault with him who is the hardened man? Why find fault with the obduracy that is to be traced, in part at

least, to the agency of God's own will? These questions are not the apostle's. They are *put to him* by those who objected to his teaching. *Thou wilt say to me.* The objector, in putting them, fails indeed to discriminate. God, it is true, *has* to do with men's hardness of heart. In so far as the hardness is penal, it is right that God should take to do with it. But if it be penal, it must come after transgression. And if it come after transgression, surely, unless exorbitant in degree—and this is not hinted—it is right. It *is* right to punish wilful wrong-doing. It *is* right in God—the great Patron of morals—to “find fault” with sin. The advocate of the great body of the Jews will not succeed in effectively defending his clients by ringing changes on the query, *Why doth He yet find fault?*

This query however is buttressed by another, from which the objector might expect to derive an irresistible argument in support of his unbelieving clients: *For who has resisted His pleasure?* If no one has, then how can any one be to blame? If man be incapable of resisting the pleasure of God, and if therefore, as a matter of fact, he never does resist it, how can it be right to punish him? He would then be in truth and in the highest sense of the phrase an unpunishable being. He might be a sufferer. He might be maltreated. He might be lashed till he should die, and then be lashed again for ever, with a

scourge more terrible than any earthly lash ; but if he has never resisted the will of God he cannot be punished. Tormented he may be, but he cannot be punished. The argument behind which the unbelieving Jew had got hope of logical shelter is blown into utter shreds.

We have thus answered, from our own philosophic standpoint, handed down to us as a heritage from many successive ages, the queries proposed by the Israelitish objector. Let us now take note more particularly of the way in which the apostle himself, as distinguished from his modern readers and critics, deals with the objection that had been flung in his face.

Ver. 20. *Indeed ! O man ! Who art thou that art replying against God ? Shall the thing moulded say to him who moulded it, Why didst thou make me thus ?*

The apostle, in opening his reply, says with deep emotion, *O man !* He does not say, *O Jew !* He is keeping in the background all Jewish peculiarity. He has before his observation man as man in antagonism to God as God. How different the potency of the one, as related to the other ! How insignificant the creature !

In realizing this insignificance of one of the parties before him, the apostle, as it were, *groans in spirit*, and says, "*Indeed !*" It is in Greek an

untranslatable idiomatic expression (*μενοῦνγε*). It occurs in Luke xi. 28, and is rendered *yea rather*. It occurs again in Romans x. 18, and is rendered *yes verily*. It occurs again in the received text of Philippians iii. 8, and was rendered by King James's translators *yea doubtless*. Here, in Romans ix. 20, the only other New Testament passage in which it occurs, it is, in accordance with its frequent function as a corrective, rendered in King James's version, *Nay but*. Many translators, such as the Vulgate, Wyckliffe, and the authors of the Rheims, leave it entirely untranslated. None of the renderings given is literal, or could be. Idiom must just confront idiom, and, in some intelligible though peculiar way, give expression, as by means of the versatile term "indeed!" to a mingled feeling of surprise, indignation, and distress.

*Who art thou, who art replying against God?* The apostle was not mistaken in supposing that the Jewish advocate, in his zeal to repel the insinuation contained in the word *hardeneth* (ver. 18), had, as it were, threatened to throw off from his clients moral accountability, and to throw it over upon God. If it be the case that the mass of the people were, as the apostle contended, unbelieving in reference to the Christ, and hence involved in a penal process of moral degeneration and induration, *why blame us?* contended the Jew. *How could we help ourselves?*

Such queries do not, as we have seen, repre-

sent difficulties which pressed upon the heart and intellect of the apostle. He had at hand logical and psychological truth, which afforded his spirit complete relief. But the queries referred to represent objections to his doctrine on the part of his unbelieving countrymen, who were prepared to urge the most sweeping objections to the moral conduct of God, if the apostle's representations were to be accepted and maintained. The apostle however does not here argue, as in a *théodicée*, in defence of the moral perfection of God. He confronts the objector sternly, and says, *Who art thou?* or, as Tyndale renders it, *What art thou?* and *what is thy position in the great universe, to warrant thee to "chop logic with God" (Day), and to throw out against Him infamous charges?* *Thou mightest ask indeed, if reverently, for "light, light, more light."* But to answer pertly and presumptuously is utterly inconsistent in a reasonable being.

*Shall the thing moulded say to him that moulded it, Why didst thou make me thus?* Let a man transfer himself for a moment to an earthenware establishment. Suppose that some article of the ware were endowed with self-consciousness and ability to speak, would it be reasonable that it should complain of the form of the vessel into which it had been manufactured by the moulder's hand? What scope is there for grumbling to the effect that it was not fashioned into something



else? The maker and proprietor of the articles moulded has, beyond all controversy, the sovereign right to make what sorts of things he pleases out of the material that belongs to him; and there is neither obligation on the part of the moulder, nor responsibility on the part of the mould, on the one hand, or of the clay, on the other.

Ver. 21. *Or, hath not the potter a right over his clay to make, out of the same lump, one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?*<sup>1</sup>

The preceding clause concerning the moulder paves the way for the more picturesque representation, in this verse, of the potter. The potter, who owns the clay on which he operates, has absolute control over every lump of it, and the right to make of it whatever kinds of vessels he pleases. Human potters however are not always wise, even for their own interest. They are sometimes the victims of negligence or caprice, or temper, and may carelessly or wantonly mar the vessel on which they are engaged. But God is as unerringly wise as He is absolute in power. If any vessel be marred in His hand, the blame will not be attributable to Him. Vessels for honour and dishonour respectively are vessels for either noble or ignoble uses.

<sup>1</sup> See J. Wetzel's *De Jure Figuli in Vasa*.

Vers. 22, 23. *But if God, though wishful to display His indignation, and to make His power known, endured, in much longsuffering, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and thus endured them in order that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He fitted afore for glory.*

The figure of the potter or the moulder is by far too limited to afford anything approximating a full-orbed view of the relation of God to sinful men. And hence the wider and richer and more varied representation that we find in verses 22, 23.

*But if* (it be the case that God is “willing,” or “wishing,” to give high significance to certain elements in particular, out of the sum total of the severer manifestations of His attributes), if that should be the case, and if nevertheless He refrain, for a lengthened period, from inflicting condign punishment upon the defiant criminals who prowl about at a distance from the throne, giving them respite, what then?

Before answering that question, take note of the strong word *wishing* or *wishful* or *desiring*, “God though *wishing*.” God, as the apostle knew, had strong *desire* in a certain given direction; and yet He withheld from Himself what He desired. There are some, of whom

the Lord says, "It is in My *desire* that I should chastise them." (Hos. x. 10.) But "how shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I surrender thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within Me; My repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger." (Hos. xi. 8, 9.)

There are contrary, though not contradictory, desires in the heart of God, as in other hearts. He desires, on the one hand, to display His indignation in reference to persistent sinfulness; and that is right. And He desires, on the other, that even those who have long persisted in sin should have renewed opportunity of abandoning their evil ways; and that too is surely right.

*And to make known His power:* His infinite ability, not merely to guide the stellar firmaments along their intricate paths, but in particular to bring to nought the machinations of the adversaries of His peerlessly excellent ethical rule,—all the machinations, in other words, of the selfish to secure for themselves the unchecked gratification of their selfishness.

*Hath endured, in much longsuffering, vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.*

There was *endurance* on the part of God. The doings of certain men were ill to bear; yet God has borne, and bears. Of the contrary desires, that seemed to struggle in the Divine

heart for the mastery, God yielded to that in which mercy was predominant. He endured the ill with "much longsuffering." No other being could or would have borne so wonderfully long.

The objects endured or borne are called by the apostle *vessels of wrath*. We must think on two intermingling modes of representation. One is that of literal reality; the other is that of figurative conception. The "vessels of wrath," looked at in the light of literal reality, are men, living men, sadly sinful, and most persistent in their sinfulness. Hence they are objects of Divine indignation. This idea of living men, persistently sinful, must be intermingled with the other idea of pottery-vessels fit and "fitted for destruction." These vessels, we may represent to ourselves, as stained and full of blemishes, splintered and chipped, bedaubed and encrusted with abominations that smell rank with poisonous exhalations. If such vessels were brought forth for the inspection of the proprietor, they should, one would suppose, be instantly condemned, and broken, it may be, into a thousand shivers. They are "fitted for destruction." No human proprietor would be wishful or willing to retain them in his home or in his store. But when we drop this figurative representation, and take into consideration the principles on which God acts in His literal relations to living men, then *vessels of wrath* are *men* who, in consequence of

persisted-in sin, are the fit objects of Divine indignation. In being *fitted for destruction*, there is no specification of any agency. But agency of one kind or other must of course be assumed, and it is to be borne in mind that the apostle has said, “Whom He desires He forgivingly pitieth, and *whom He desires He unforgivingly hardeneth.*” Man’s own hand is doubtless operative in the matter; and so is the hand of God. There are double factors at work with a view to the ultimate issue in destiny both of those on the right hand, and of those on the left.

There is a difference in the standpoint of representation between the pottery-vessels spoken of in verse 21, and those that are spoken of in verse 22. Those mentioned in verse 21 are such as have just come from the hand of the potter, whereas those that are referred to in verse 22 are such as have been in household use. The men referred to were “endured with *much long-suffering.*” Even after a long career of mis-improved privileges, God’s patience towards them is not utterly exhausted.

There is something of ellipsis—twofold indeed—in the phraseology of verse 23. Hence, at the commencement of the verse, the first clause, if we assume the genuineness of the copulative conjunction<sup>1</sup> *and*, may be supplemented thus,

<sup>1</sup> The whole troop of uncials, with the exception of B, read καὶ ἵνα.

“and bore with them”; that is, “and if He bore with them,” in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared afore for glory,”—*if He did so.*

Here is the other supplement,—*What ground has any one to complain?* Some such supplement is required to complete the apostle’s query, and to repel the odious, fault-finding objection which is but the echo of verse 19.

In the expression, *The riches of His glory*, there is doubtless a reference to high celestial condition. Such a condition is glorious, and all are truly enriched who enjoy it. The apostle, though not rich in the materialisms of this world, had a profound conception of the value of riches when righteously used and diffused; so that his frequent use of the term in one or other of its phases is a kind of Pauline idiom of thought. (See Rom. ii. 4, xi. 12, 33; 2 Cor. viii. 2; Eph. i. 7, 18, iii. 8, 16; Col. i. 27.)

The expression, “*upon vessels of mercy*,” is founded on the idea that the heavens are above us, so that if any element of things heavenly becomes to any a blessing and inestimable boon, it descends and comes *upon* them. They are hence “vessels of Divine mercy.” Some great boon from God is indicated. But we must pass from the figurative to the real in our consideration of it; and thus *vessels of mercy* are *men who*



*are objects of God's forgiving mercy.* They may have done much injury to themselves, but the great Proprietor has had patience and long-suffering. In the figurative presentation the vessels have been diligently cleansed and renovated, so that they are ready for use in the "great house" of the great King. These "vessels of mercy" God Himself has cleansed and restored—"He has prepared them afore." In the light of this decisive reference to the agency of God, one can appreciate the delicacy of the impersonal representation of the corresponding clause in verse 22. All good may always, either directly or indirectly, be traced to the agency of God. Evil has an entirely different source. God is not a Fountain of both sweet waters and bitter. If evil be darkness, then "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." There are spots on the sun, but none in God. The word *prepared* in the phrase, *prepared afore*, is just such a representation of *sanctification* as normally assumes the supremacy of the future in its relation to the past and the present.

Ver. 24. *Whom He called, even us, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles.*

Not only are the heirs of glory prepared afore for their ultimate exaltation, they receive express invitation. They are *called*. They are invited

as guests to the banquet of bliss. And as they pass on in relays their ranks are filled up, not exclusively from the favoured circle of the Jews, but from Gentiles as well.

Ver. 25. *As also He says in Hosea, Them who were NOT-MY-PEOPLE I will call MY-PEOPLE, and her BELOVED who was NOT-BELOVED.*<sup>1</sup>

The word *call* is here used, not quite as in the preceding verse, but as equivalent to *name*. There is indeed an ultimate connexion between the two nuncupative significations. They spring from one stem. But nevertheless there is a distinction and a difference.

God Himself speaks in the Old Testament words. "He says." He had spoken long before. He had used a painfully significant name, or rather two names, which might be used to replace each other. The idea of repudiation is prominent in them both. NOT-MY-PEOPLE, or LO-AMMI; NOT-BELOVED, or LO-RUHAMA. Yet this repudiated people is not to be always alien. The names are to be turned upside down; for the relationship is to be entirely different from what it had been. God therefore, in speaking to the people, is to call out the new names AMMI, or MY-PEOPLE, and

<sup>1</sup> See Immanuel Hoffmann's *Observationes Philologico-Criticæ in oracula V.T. Hoseæ c. ii. 1, 25, et Esaie c. x. 22, 23, a Paulo, in Rom. ix. 25-28, citata.* 1766.

RUHAMAH, OR BELOVED. The "prepared" ones will be gathered out from among both Jews and Gentiles, and God will give them their new names. The prophecy, as it lies in Hosea, will be completely fulfilled only in millennial times. But ere the dawn of these times, and their ultimate ascent to the zenith of their glory, there may be, and there doubtless will be, successive instalments of fulfilment. In the condition of the individual the group will be reflected. In the condition of the group there will be the reflection of the condition of the great congregation. In the condition of the great congregation there will be the vivid representation and vastitude of the incoming fulness of every kindred and tongue and people and nation, like the fulness of the sea.

The prediction in Hosea ii. 23—freely rendered as it is by the Septuagint translator, as also by the apostle—seems to be intended to give emphasis to the reality of the blessing that is in store for the beloved people—the "prepared" ones, the "vessels of mercy." We need not at this stage of the subject inquire minutely into the contextual relations of the passage quoted. Taking the words by themselves, and as they are presented to us by the apostle, there is no information given us regarding their primary application. But they are most admirably applicable to both Gentiles and Jews. When we turn

indeed to the original trend of the prediction, as made known by the context, we find a manifest reference to the children of Israel as distinguished from the Gentiles.

Nevertheless the beautiful language is as applicable to Gentiles as to Israelites, and the apostle seems here to quote it *because of its inherent applicability to both*. Unless we take this view of the relevancy of the quotation, we would find it necessary to assume that the apostle regarded the degenerated Israelites, the ten tribes, as a Gentilised community. To assume that the apostle misunderstood the prophet would be the quintessence of puerility.

Ver. 26. *And it shall be that in the place where it was said, Ye are NOT-MY-PEOPLE, there they shall be called SONS OF THE LIVING GOD.*

A parallel representation to that of the preceding verse, and quoted from Hosea i. 10. It is taken *verbatim* from the Septuagint version. Wherever it has been said by God, though in the language of works, as distinguished from that of words, Ye are NOT-MY-PEOPLE, in that very place would men, who look so frequently on the mere surface of things, be constrained to recognise them as sons of the living God, sons in privilege because sons in character. They will be a filial people, and thus a "holy people," a

“willing people,” a “peculiar people,” a “people zealous of good works.”

Ver. 27. *But Isaiah cries concerning Israel, If the number of the sons of Israel (be) as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. (Isa. x. 22.)*

The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish (*κράζει*), cries over Israel to this effect, *Let the number of the Israelites be as multitudinous as may be, it is the remnant, the mere remnant, that will be saved.* The prophet saw days of desolation looming in the future; and of the people only one here and two or three there would be saved. “The remnant of the trees of their forest shall be so few that a child may write them.” Why? Look forward to verses 30–33. At the expression, *shall be saved*, the apostle, as distinguished from the prophet, steps over the line that separates in this prophecy relationships material from relationships spiritual. It is spiritual salvation of which he thinks.

Ver. 28 is perspicuously rendered by Godet thus: *For the Lord will make a short and summary reckoning on the earth.* Consult Johan Aurelius’s *Dissertatio-Exegetico-Theologica de verbo abbrevi-*

*ato, ex Rom. ix. 28, collat. cum Ies. x. 23. 1710.*  
Compare also Ps. ii. 9-12, cx. 5-7.

Ver. 29. *And as Isaiah said in a previous oracle, Unless the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed, we should have been as Sodom and made like to Gomorrha. (Isa. i. 9.)*

*Of sabaoth, that is, of hosts. A seed, "a little remnant, like the residuum of corn which the husbandman leaves for his seed-corn, and out of which new crops are to arise. . . . Unless the Lord of sabaoth had left us such a little remnant, containing within itself the hopes of the nation for the future, . . . we had become, long ere this time, a complete desolation."* (ELNATHAN PARR *in loc.*) It is a marvel that they had not been long ago consumed, more especially after the unfurling of the fulness of the gospel of Christ.

Ver. 30. *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who were not pursuing after righteousness, obtained righteousness, the righteousness that is from faith.*

It is the righteousness that comes to us from God (Phil. iii. 9), as His gift to unrighteous men (Rom. v. 17). It was wrought out by Jesus, who was thereby "*Jesus Christ the righteous*" (1



John ii. 1), and "*the Lord our righteousness.*" He was wondrously "*the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.*" (Rom. x. 4.) "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made *the righteousness of God in Him.*" (2 Cor. v. 21.) The gospel is God's lever-power for salvation, because "therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith to faith." (Rom. i. 16, 17.) Alas! the great majority of the Jews disbelieved the good news, and hence the stream of transformative power was shut off and utterly diverted from its grand ethical function.

Ver. 31. *But Israel, pursuing after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law?*

It was a conspicuous term of honour, this word *law*, and by no means inapplicable to the subject which the apostle had in hand. The Jews knew that righteousness is indispensable for the weal of all moral beings. Hence they aimed at it, and pursued after it. They prosecuted their aim by seeking to obtain guidance from their law. Unhappily however they took a remarkably superficial, outside view of the requirements of "*the law of righteousness,*" and neglected the weightier and far more important matters of justice, mercy, and fidelity. They tithed punctiliously mint, anise, and cummin, but could extortionately

screw and victimise widows and orphans. With a kind of rigid zeal they passed onward with their performances, but did not attain to the "law of righteousness." They were nevertheless content with their state, and looked with high and haughty eyes as they stalked about in society.

Ver. 32. *Wherefore? Because not by faith, but as by works. For they stumbled on the stumbling stone.*

There is the ellipsis in the first clause of an appropriate active verb; yet, in English, as well as in Greek, it is not necessary that any one definite term should be formally specified even in thought. The masses of the apostle's countrymen were diligently engaged in the performance of religious services with a view to salvation, or at least to safety and glory. But the spirit that actuated them was wrong. They turned their faces in the direction of the law, as if they were to attain eternal life by meritorious observances. They would not stoop to take note of the true foundation on which they might repose in absolute security. The gospel was a heraldic announcement of the true and only way of salvation for sinners. Faith in it was the link that would have secured, in their behalf, all the resources of infinity. Just as if there had been no such

principle available as faith in a Divine interposition, they sought for safety “as by works,” and repudiated the one true way of salvation. They trusted to their own merit, not to that of the long-promised Mediator and Redeemer. *For they stumbled on the stone of stumbling.* It is a case of culpable colliding. The fault was entirely theirs, and so is the resultant injury that has to be endured.

Ver. 33. *As it stands written, Lo, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of collision: and he who believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.*

Our attention is turned to a great foundation-stone laid by God. Its intent was merciful. It could be used as a place of refuge. If not thus used, and if a storm arise and torrents come rushing on, the fugitives will, in their wild panic, be in danger of dashing along until they come into crashing collision with the stone, and be utterly broken. The stone, though primarily a provision of mercy and a secure retreat, can be turned to penal account, and made use of to be a beacon throughout the world and the vast moral universe. The great body of the Jews rushed against the stone—the Rock of ages. But there was a remnant; and “he who believed on HIM, on *the Stone*, on *the Saviour*, would never be ashamed or confounded world

without end." The prophet Isaiah thus represents the idea of chapter xxviii. 16 : "He that believeth shall *not make haste*." The apostle's representation is as follows : "He that believeth shall *not be ashamed*." The parallelism of the two shades of promise is peculiarly interesting, varying as it does in form, but being identical in substance. The Old Testament statement represents the refugee as standing calm and secure on the Stone. He has no need to be in an anguish of "hurry." Knowing that procrastination is perilous and delusive, he had improved "the day of his visitation"; and now "in perfect peace" he awaits the issue.

The apostle represents the refugee as safe in his position on the Rock, looking steadily in the face,—and free from any confusion of countenance,—those who, in their self-security, may have formerly taunted him for fleeing to such a Refuge. But his boasting is not in vain. He knows in whom he has believed. Therefore he shall never be confounded; for that *Rock is CHRIST*.

## APPENDIX.

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### I.—PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION.

- (1) *Not allegorical*;
- (2) *Not national*;
- (3) *But historical*.

1. *Not Allegorical*.—Some ingenious interpreters have supposed that the Old Testament facts concerning Isaac and Ishmael, and then concerning Jacob and Esau, as respectively referred to in Romans ix. 6–13, were intended to be interpreted on an allegorical principle. With varying consistency and with varying acuteness and ability has this idea been accepted and wrought out by Irenæus (*Contra Omnes Hæres.* lib. iv. 38), Ambrosiaster (*Comment.* in loc.), Pelagius (*Comment.* in loc.), and Sedulius Scotus (*Collectan.* in loc.); and among the moderns by Gellius (*Isagoge* in loc.), Arminius (*Analysis* in loc.), Borre (*Explicat. Diluc.* in loc.), Goodwin (*Expos.* in loc.), Poelenburg (*Epist. Eccles. et Theol.*, p. 911), and many others. Of all these authors none seems to have exhibited more

masterly exegesis than Borre. The principle of interpretation however is untenable.

For (1) there is no hint given by the apostle that he is speaking allegorically. In Galatians iv. 24-31, he speaks allegorically; but he pre-intimates the fact by saying, *ἀτινά ἐστὶν ἀλληγορούμενα*—*which things are not an allegory in their own nature, but allegorised, namely by me Paul, in the following manner.*

(2) If we adopt an allegorical interpretation of certain verses of the chapter, who shall determine the line of *thus far and no farther* to which we are to carry the principle? Most of the allegorists referred to conclude their allegorising at verse 12 or 13, and regard the remainder of the chapter as a vindication of the truths allegorically enunciated in these and the preceding verses. But this division of the chapter into allegorical and non-allegorical verses is entirely arbitrary.

(3) According to the allegorical interpretation, the phrase, in verse 7, "*In Isaac shall seed to thee be named,*" must mean, "In those who are supernaturally born again, after the similitude of Isaac's birth, shall thy true spiritual seed be called." See all the allegorical expositors. But it seems to be impossible that the expression, "in Isaac," can bear such a meaning, more especially as it is immediately added in Genesis xxi. 13, "And also of the son of the bond-woman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed." This



cannot mean that "God would make a people conformed in their spiritual condition to the natural birth of Ishmael"; and therefore the preceding clause regarding Isaac cannot refer to a people to be conformed in their spiritual condition to the supernatural birth of Isaac. Moreover the apostle would not have said, ἐν Ἰσαάκ, had his idea been run into the allegorical mould. He would doubtless have used some such expression as κατὰ τὴν ὁμοιότητα Ἰσαάκ, or simply κατὰ Ἰσαάκ. (See Gal. iv. 28.)

(4) The allegorical interpretation is at variance with verse 9, "For this word is (one) of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall bear a son." We are here informed what is the precise "promise" referred to in the expression, "the children of the promise." Note the introductory and causative particle "for." Allegorists however are necessitated by their system to give a very different interpretation of "the promise" in the expression, "the children of the promise." That expression, according to them, describes those who "depend on the gracious and free promise of God for adoption, justification, and salvation" (Goodwin, *Expos.*, p. 79); and therefore the promise referred to must denote the great and precious sum of promises which is assured to us in Christ (Borre, 110). But such an idea is immensely removed from that of the apostle: "For this word is one of promise, *At*

*this time (next year) will I come, and Sarah shall have a son."*

(5) The allegorical interpretation, in making Esau the typical representative either of the unbelieving Jews in particular (Gellius), or of those unbelievers in general who seek justification by the works of the law (Borre), and in explaining his "servitude," as indicating the denegation of the heavenly inheritance to the self-righteously impenitent, fails to find a reason why the servitude should be predicated of him before he was born or had done any evil. Can an unborn babe—considered without respect to its future good or evil deeds—be a fit representative of self-righteously impenitent Jews or Gentiles?

(6) In the case of Jacob too, the allegorical interpretation, whether regarding him as the type of believing Gentiles (Gellius) or of believers in general (Borre), entirely fails to account for the fact that the blessing of the first-born seems to have been awarded to him without any respect to anything in him, good or evil, that might have morally distinguished him from his brother. An unborn man can no more *believe* than he can perform, or try to perform, *the works of the law*.

The allegorical interpretation again, though ingeniously representing (in the system of Borre) "the elder son of Rebecca" as typifying "the children of the old covenant," and "the younger son" as typifying "the children of the new,"

yet stumbles in this very representation on an inconsistency. For while Hagar, the mother of Ishmael, may denote the old covenant, and Sarah, the mother of Isaac, the new, Rebecca, being the mother both of Jacob and of Esau, cannot denote both covenants; and how therefore could her sons indicate, in the priority and posteriority of their respective births, not younger and older children of one covenant, but the children of two different covenants, one old and the other new?

2. *Not National*.—The illustrious John Locke says, “He that will, with moderate attention and indifferency of mind, read this ninth chapter, will see that what is said of God’s exercising of an absolute power, according to the good pleasure of His will, relates only to nations or bodies politic of men incorporated in civil societies, which feel the effects of it only in the prosperity or calamity they meet with in this world, but extends not to their eternal state in another world, considered as particular persons, wherein they stand each man by himself, and shall so answer separately at the day of judgment.” (*Works*, vol. iii., p. 308, ed. 1740.) The same idea is substantially maintained by John Taylor, of Norwich (*Paraphrase and Notes*, in loc.), Richard Watson (*Theol. Instit.*, vol. iii., p. 34 ff., ed. 1829), and others. It is however untenable, for—

(1) The apostle, when he says in verse 6, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel," seems, in the expression "not all," to be referring distributively to his countrymen, individually considered. So in the parallel expression next verse.

(2) In the quotation from Exodus xxxiii. 19, contained in verse 15, there is, as is evident from the context of the original passage, a reference not to nations, but to individuals in the one nation of the Israelites, as the objects of God's forgiving mercy: "I shall have mercy on whomsoever [*i.e.* on whatsoever individual person] I will have mercy," etc.

(3) When it is said, in verse 16, "So then it is not of him that desireth, nor of him that runneth," the "desiring" and the "running" ones are certainly more naturally conceived of as being individual men, than as being collective peoples.

(4) In verse 17 the individual Pharaoh is adduced as affording an appropriately illustrative example of the treatment which [not Egyptian-like nations, but] Pharaoh-like individuals will receive at the hand of an unbelief-avenging God.

(5) In verse 18, the repeated expression, "*whomsoever* He will" most naturally leads us to think of individuals, individually considered.

(6) In the same verse 18, the expression,

“He hardeneth,” *i.e.* “He hardeneth the heart,” leads us to think not of *the heart of a nation*, but of *the hearts of individual men*, individually considered.

(7) The expression in verse 18, “For *who* hath resisted His will?” when understood to be spoken by a captious Jew, must mean, not “what nation on the face of the earth,” but “who of us Jews [*i.e.* what hardened individual among us] hath resisted his will?”

(8) The parable in verse 21, though explicable on a national principle, if considered apart from the context, most naturally brings into view God’s authority over such individual men as are referred to in the preceding and succeeding contextual passages.

(9) The expression, “vessels of wrath,” in verse 22, seems, seeing it is plural, most naturally to denote, not wrath-deserving nations, but wrath-deserving men; and if they are “fitted for destruction” in the sense of being “fashioned unto dishonour” and “hardened in heart” (and the connexion seems to demand such an interpretation), then assuredly it must be individual hearts that are referred to.

(10) The “vessels of mercy, prepared afore unto glory,” spoken of in verse 23, are said by the apostle, in verse 24, to be “not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles,” *i.e.* “not *from* among the nation of the Jews only, but also

from among Gentiles," and therefore they must be individuals prepared for heavenly glory, and not nations fitted for exaltation to earthly privileges.

(11) In verse 27, the "vessels of mercy" "from among Jews" are compared to "a remnant," and are therefore not nations or a nation.

(12) When the apostle says, in verse 30, "That Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness," he certainly describes the experience only of individual Gentiles here and there in heathendom; for it has not yet become historically true that whole Gentile nations have attained to saving righteousness.

(13) When the apostle describes, verse 30, the righteousness attained by the "Gentiles" to whom he referred, as being "the righteousness which is [available] by faith," he certainly does not refer to such a thing as national faith. He must mean the faith of individuals individually considered.

(14) When he speaks, in verse 31, of "Israel," he must certainly mean *the Israelites*, individually considered; for he speaks of them as "following after the law of righteousness," and yet not attaining to it *because they sought it not by faith*. He cannot be referring to national faith.

(15) When he winds up the chapter by saying,



“whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed,” it is beyond all possibility of dispute that he refers to individual men.

(16) And as verses 30–33 evidently contain the key of the entire chapter, it must be the case, seeing they refer not to nations, nationally considered, but to individuals, individually considered, that the entire chapter is to be explained on a principle precisely the reverse of that enunciated by John Locke, and adopted by too many of his exegetical followers.

3. *But Historical.*—The apostle commences the chapter with a bit of his own history, his autobiography—for autobiographic history he had. When he speaks of one who loved his people, and so loved them that he was willing to make almost unparalleled sacrifices in their behalf,—it is to himself, a historic man, that he refers. His life was history. When he proceeds to depict the peculiar prerogatives of his people, he simply writes more history. When he goes back to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, he touches on the lives of men and women who actually lived in the East and helped to make important history. He traces a historic line from the patriarch-fathers, down through the ages, to Christ.

When Rebecca received her oracle, informing her in reference to her twins, the information is

regarded by the apostle as matter of historic fact.

Nations, it is true, were referred to under the the words *Jacob* and *Esau*; but the nations were real peoples, who had a real history, into which they fitted, and who for generations were conspicuous for the part they acted on their peculiar ethnological stage in time.

Moses is introduced, speaking on the one hand with God, and on the other with men, historically. Pharaoh too is introduced on the scene. Egyptologists know his name and his character. He is assuredly a historical personage. And thus, from the commencement of the chapter to its close, the apostle deals with public facts; *i.e.* with history. His writing in this ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans is to be interpreted historically.

## II.—THE APOSTLE'S ANATHEMA. (Ver. 3.)

Quite a thicket of literature has sprung up around the apostle's statement of his willingness to be an anathema. See Jo. Jacobus Hottin-gerus: *Diatriba Theologica de anathemate Paulino*. 1710.—Christophorus Hancke: *Anathema Pauli Votivum in Epist. ad Rom.* 1729.—J. T. Lindner: *Anathema Pauli Votivum*. 1729.—Jo. Christoph. Trautermann: *Illustratio loci vexatissimi Rom. ix. 3, in quo Paullus se pro fratribus*

*suis devovit.* 1748.—Bartholomew Keeling: *St. Paul's wish to be Accursed from Christ, for the sake of his Brethren, Illustrated and Vindicated from Misconstructions. In three discourses; to which is added an appendix containing a collection of the most material observations upon the text by ancient and modern writers.* 1776. The same author published a kindred work, entitled, *Moses's Petition to be Blotted Out of the Book of God, Explained and Vindicated from Misconstruction; and the Excellence of his Character displayed.* In three discourses. 1767.—I add J. F. Winzer: *Explanatur locus Pauli ad Romanos Epistolæ, cap. ix. 1-6.* 1832.—From among numerous pulpit discourses I select as of transcendent ability and wisdom, Dr. John Lightfoot's Sermon on Romans ix., *St. Paul's Wish to be Accursed.* (Pitman's edition, vol. vii., pp. 312-333.)

A considerable group of expositors have regarded the first moiety of this third verse as parenthetical. They thus connect directly the words of the second moiety (*for my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh*) with the affirmation, *that I have great grief in reference to them, and continual sorrow in my heart.* The parenthetical statement is translated thus: (*for I myself used to wish to be accursed from the Messiah*). The apostle is supposed to be referring to his own infatuation, during the time of his antagonism to Christ and Christianity, for the purpose of

obliquely depicting, from the standpoint of his own experience, the lamentable spiritual condition of his countrymen, and of thus accounting for the overwhelming sorrow under which, in virtue of the genuine sympathy of his heart, he was suffering. This interpretation has substantially been given to the passage by Glas, Bowyer, Wakefield, Toplady, Belsham, Rodolphus Dickinson, Walford, Craik. All of these interpreters throw the first moiety of the verse into a parenthesis, and obliterate the full-point at the conclusion of the second verse. Wakefield's rendering of the parenthesis is (*for I also was once an alien from Christ*). Belsham's is (*for I myself once gloried in being an alien from Christ*). Tregelles seems to have taken the same view, for he incloses the first moiety of the verse in a parenthesis.

Others, without the mechanical parenthetical expedient, give substantially the same interpretation. They regard the words of the first moiety of the verse as descriptive of the apostle's mental condition while he was yet an opponent of Christianity. This is Heumann's interpretation in his monograph, and Trautmann's in his monograph, and also Dr. Chalmers's. It would seem to have been Luther's also, and Tyndale's, and Coverdale's. The author of the *Itala* had taken the same view, so far at least. He rendered the word, not potentially, but historically, *I*

*was wishing*,<sup>1</sup> viz. at a former period, not now; *I was*, at a former period, *in the habit of wishing*. This translation was continued in the Vulgate, and was accepted and commented on by Ambrosiaster, Pelagius, Primasius. Ambrosiaster says, "*I was wishing*, not *I do wish*."<sup>2</sup> Pelagius says, "*I was wishing*—formerly when I was a persecutor of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Primasius says, "*I was wishing* formerly, not *I could now wish*."<sup>4</sup> Wycliffe followed the Vulgate. His translation of the clause is, "Forsothe I my silf desyride for to be cursid fro Crist." The Rheims version corresponds, "For I wished myself to be anathema from Christ."

It cannot be objected to this interpretation that it attributes to the verb an unnatural or unidiomatic import; for the imperfect tense in Greek, as in Latin, naturally denotes repeated, continued, persistent, or habitual action in past time. And sometimes the reference to the particular portion of past time in which such action took place is only indirectly indicated; as when it is said, in Mark xv. 6, "Now at that feast he *released* to them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired." The meaning is, "Now at that feast *he was wont to release* to them one prisoner." (Comp. Matt. xxvii. 15.)

<sup>1</sup> "Optabam."

<sup>2</sup> "Optabam, non opto."

<sup>3</sup> "Optabam aliquando cum persequerer Christum."

<sup>4</sup> "Optabam aliquando, non nunc optarem."

Nevertheless, even in the case of such a passage as Mark xv. 6 there is reference, though indirect, to the particular portion of past time during which the repeated action of the Roman procurator transpired. It was the portion which embraced those recurrent seasons of the Passover feast which had occurred during Pilate's procuratorship. It was at *the annual festival time* that he paid the Jewish people the compliment specified. But as regards Romans ix. 3, there is no reference, beyond the verb itself, to the past as past; and of course there is not in the verb itself any particularisation of any distinct portion of past time. There is nothing corresponding to Pelagius's interpretation, "when I was a persecutor of Christ," or even to the indefinite "once" of Wakefield and Belsham. The apostle does not speak of his "conversation" or conduct *in time past in the Jews' religion*, when "beyond measure he persistently persecuted the Church of God" (Gal. i. 13); and hence it is improbable that his statement here is, like his statement in Galatians i. 13, historical.

Further. The apostle's expression is not simply "accursed from Christ." It is far stronger—"accursed from *the Christ*," accursed from *the Messiah*.

We may rest assured that as Saul of Tarsus was both an eminently earnest and an eminently ecclesiastical man, he never did wish to be not



only "accursed," but so accursed as never to have part or lot in the bliss of the Messiah's reign. We can easily conceive of him, in the days of his impenitence, pouring contempt and hatred upon Jesus of Nazareth as a mere pretender to Messiahship, and wishing himself to be forever far away from such a pretender. But we cannot conceive of him feeling—under any pressure, however strong, on his temper or his prejudices—the same contempt and hatred for the ideal Deliverer of his race, to whose advent he was, in common with all the pious of his people, looking longingly and eagerly forward.

The potential rendering is in perfect accordance with usage, in both classical and biblical Greek.

The apostle did not actually desire to be an anathema. He knew that such a desire would never be divinely fulfilled, and hence he did not cherish it. A wise man keeps his desires under control. He has, indirectly, command over them. A pious man takes God's desires and purposes into account, and does not entertain any desire which he knows to be at variance with the Divine will, or with the Divine arrangements that are dependent on the Divine will. Hence it is that the apostle does not say, *I desire*; he only says, *I could desire*. He would have been willing and wishful to be anathema for his countrymen, provided such an awful self-sacrifice had been in

harmony with the will and wish of God, and thus consistent with the best interests of God's immense moral empire. So far as the apostle himself was concerned, he was ready for the self-sacrifice, provided it should be legitimate, on the one hand, and could be efficacious, on the other.

It would not, however, have been of avail, and hence the wish *was never fully formed*. The potential did not pass into the actual.

It is true, indeed, that the potential translation of the verb used by the apostle, viz. *I could wish*, though doubtless the only correct rendering that is possible in the circumstances, is nevertheless an imperfect reflection of the original "imperfect" tense. The idioms of the English and Greek languages are by no means identical. The potential *could* is not actually part and parcel of the Greek imperfect tense, although its use in English is, on the present occasion, the best expedient to which we can have recourse, to reproduce substantially the nicety of the original. The Greek imperfect tense is really a tense, or time, not a potency. It is a past tense, not present or future. But it is *a past tense incomplete*. It is to be carefully differentiated from a strictly "perfect" time or tense—a tense completed and complete. Hence the real idea of the word is, *I was desiring*. The desire rose up in the apostle's heart, and to a certain extent he allowed and

sanctioned it. Yet only to a certain extent, for a higher desire struck in and controlled it—the desire to be in perfect accord with God’s desire and will. Hence his desire to be anathema for his countrymen never was completed and complete. It hung suspended. It remained “imperfect.” It was conditional, and the condition that would have brought it to maturity was never forthcoming. Thus the embryo-desire was in reality but a potency, so that the translation *I could desire* is vindicated.

It may now still further be noticed that the word rendered *I could* “*wish*,” or *I could* “*desire*,” properly means *I could* “*pray*” (ἐνχόμην). Keeling takes note of the fact,<sup>1</sup> and Schrader translates the verb, *I have prayed*.<sup>2</sup> The word is expressly rendered *pray* in 2 Corinthians xiii. 7 and James v. 16; and it really has the same meaning in 2 Corinthians xiii. 9: “This also *we wish*, even your perfection,” — “This also *we pray for*.” The expression doubtless doubles back on the seventh verse, where the true reading is not, *I pray*, but, “*we pray to God*.” The word occurs again in 3 John 2, where King James’s translators have rendered it, *I wish*; but it really means *I pray*. It has the same meaning also in Acts xxvii. 29, where King James’s translators, following the older English versions, have far too

<sup>1</sup> *St. Paul’s Wish to be Accursed from Christ*, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup> “Ich habe gebetet.” (*Der Apostel Paulus*, iv. 354.)

feebly translated thus: "Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and *wished for* the day." They did more than simply *wish*; they lifted up their desires to their gods, and *prayed for* the break of day. So the Syriac-Peshito correctly translates the word. The word occurs in only one other passage of the New Testament (Acts xxvi. 29), where St. Paul says to Agrippa, "*I would to God that not only thou,*" etc. The expression in the original is instinct with the most gentlemanly courtesy,—*I could pray to God*. It is as if he had said, *If I might venture to use the liberty of openly expressing the fulness of my feelings, I would audibly lift up my prayer to God that not only thou,* etc. The apostle's meaning in Romans ix. 3 is admirably expressed in our idiomatic phrase, *I could wish to God*.

### III.—GOODWIN'S "PAGAN'S DEBT AND DOWRY."

The following is the full title of John Goodwin's treatise: THE PAGAN'S DEBT, AND DOWRY. Or, A Brief Discussion of these Questions, Whether, How far, and in what Sence, such persons of Mankind amongst whom the Letter of the Gospel never came, are notwithstanding bound to Believe on Jesus Christ? (with some other particulars relating hereunto.) Returned by way of Answer

to a Discourse in writing, lately sent without Name, (together with a Letter, subscribed only T.S.,) unto Mr. John Goodwin, the author as yet being unknown to him, yet (as appears by the said discourse) a person of worth, and learning, and (as he supposeth) a minister of the Gospel. *By the said John Goodwin, minister of the Gospel.* 1651.

A far more wonderful book, bearing on the same subject, is the work of Raimond de Sebonde, entitled *Theologia Naturalis, sive Liber Creaturarum, specialiter de Homine et de natura ejus in quantum homo, et de his quæ sunt ei necessaria ad cognoscendum se ipsum et deum et omne debitum ad quod homo tenetur et obligatur tam deo quam proximo.* 2nd ed., 1496. A masterpiece, but utterly misunderstood by Professor Dugald Stewart. See *Collected Works*, vol. i. (1854).

#### IV.—ESAU. (Ver. 13.)

I give a few references to the literature on the subject: (1) Jo. Aug. Stempel: *Exercitatio Theologica de Salute Esavi.* 1665.—(2) Hen. Opitius: *Disputatio Theologica de Jacobo Dilecto et Esavo Rejecto, cum nondum nati essent, nec quicquam boni aut mali egissent.* 1698.—(3) Jo. Gottlieb Hoffmann: *De odio Dei adversus Esavum, ad loca Rom. ix. 13, Gen. xxv. 23, and Mal. i. 3, 4: a Jo. Marckii aliorumque corruptelis vindicanda.*

1724.—Calvin: *Thirteene Sermons of Maister John Calvine, entreating of the Free Election of God in Jacob, and of reprobation in Esau. A treatise wherein every Christian may see the excellent benefites of God towards His children, and His marvellous judgments towards the reprobate, firste published in the French tounge, and now translated into Englishe by John Fielde, for the comfort of all Christians.* 1579. This work is quite distinct from the illustrious author's Latin and French Commentaries.

#### V.—PHARAOH. THE WORD.

Josephus tells us that the word *Pharaoh*, in Egyptian, means *king* (ὁ Φαραὼν κατ' Αἰγυπτίους βασιλέα σημαίνει. *Antiq.* viii. 7, 2). The etymological import of the term has been much debated among Egyptologists. Wilkinson identifies the word with *Phra*, "the sun," (*Ancient Egyptians* i. 310,) supposing that in the adulatory usage of the Egyptians the term was constrained to throw its own lofty significance on the reigning head of the empire. But with increasing research, new light has been thrown upon both the form and the primary import of the designation. In the *Essay at the close of the Speaker's Commentary on Exodus* we read as follows: "The vocalisation and diacritic points show that the Hebrews read *Par-aoh*, not *Pa-raoh*. This is important, since



the name, whatever it might signify, was well known as the proper official designation of the kings of Egypt, and its correct pronunciation must have been familiar to the translators of the Pentateuch, and probably also to the punctuators of the Bible. The cuneiform inscriptions have the same division, *Pir-u*, not *Pi-ru*." (P. 477.)

Strangely enough, the original meaning of the designation is supposed to be "*the Sublime Porte*"; that is, *the High Gate*, or more literally *the Great House*, or still more literally, *the Double House*. Note the dual inclosure in the hieroglyphic representations.

#### VI.—THE PHARAOH OF EXODUS. (Ver. 17.)

It has been very generally supposed that the second Ramses (Raamses) was the particular Pharaoh referred to. But Sayce says: "The Pharaoh under whom the Exodus actually took place could not have been Ramses II. himself, but his son and successor, Menephta II., who ascended the throne about B.C. 1325. His reign lasted but a short time, and it was disturbed, not only by the flight of the children of Israel, but also by a great invasion of Northern Egypt by the Libyans, which was with difficulty repulsed." (*Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments*, p. 63.)

VII.—IS GOD'S WILL EVER REALLY RESISTED?  
(Ver. 19.)

On this subject take note of the views of the Greek Fathers. Hagenbach says: "All the Greek Fathers, the apologists Justin, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, and the Latin Father Minucius Felix, as well as the theologians of the Alexandrian school, Clement and Origen, represent the *αὐτεξούσιον* (or *self-determining will*) of the human soul, with all the early warmth and freshness of Hellenistic idealism, and know nothing of vice apart from voluntary determination." (*History of Doctrines*, vol. i., § 57.)

Calvin thought that the term *self-determining will* is "too arrogant" to be a legitimate representation of man's ethical constitution. (*Institutes*, lib. ii. 2, 4.)

The Greek Fathers thought of God as looking out for the things which are casting their shadows before, and as thus foreknowing all things, but yet not doing all things, and not even fixing all.

Hence the author of the *Questions and Answers* in Justin Martyr's *Works* (p. 425, ed. 1686) says, "Foreknowledge is not the cause of that which is about to be, but that which is about to be is the cause of foreknowledge."

John Damascene says, "It is necessary to know that, though God foreknows all things, He does not predestinate all." (*De Orthodoxa Fide*, lib. ii., cap. xxx.)

To come to comparatively modern times, it is worth while taking into account what is testified concerning the illustrious Archbishop Ussher by Bishop Brian Walton, the editor of the London Polyglot Bible. “This I can testify, that having *often* discourse with the late most reverend father in God, James, Lord Primate of Armagh, concerning divers controversies in divinity; and, *in particular*, the *last time that he was in London*, which was *not long before his death*, concerning the controversies of grace and freewill, election and reprobation, and the dependents thereon: he did declare his utter dislike of the doctrine of absolute reprobation, and that he held the universality of Christ’s death; and that, not only in respect of sufficiency, but also in regard of efficacy, so that all men thereby were savable; and that the reason why all were not thereby saved, was, because they did not accept of salvation offered. *And that the grace of conversion was not irresistible, but that men might, and often did, resist and reject the same.* And that in these points he did not approve the doctrine of Geneva, but was wholly of Bishop Overall’s opinion. All which I took the more notice of, because he was generally conceived to be of another judgment.” (HENRY JOHN TODD: *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Rev. Brian Walton, D.D.*, vol. i., p. 205.)

VIII.—PRACTICAL EXCURSUS ON THE POTTER AND HIS CLAY. (Ver. 21.)

*“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?”*

Hath he not? Yes, he has. That is the answer which the apostle expects. It is the answer which he himself, looking at the subject from his own peculiar standpoint, was fully prepared to give. He was right. The potter *has* power over his clay, when it is really his own, to make of the same lump one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. And God, the almighty Potter, has unchallengeable power over His clay, to make of the same human lump, subjected in all its parts to the same process of careful preparatory kneading, one vessel to honour, and another to ignominious uses or dishonour.

Let it be noticed, in the *first* place, that when the apostle speaks of the potter's power, he does not refer to his physical force. It is not ability to do of which he speaks. He does not mean that the almighty Potter is, in virtue of His almightiness, able to make, out of the same human lump, one vessel to honour and another to dishonour. He has no reference at all to any such ability. God indeed is possessed of the irresistible and almighty force that is essential to

creating; but it is not to this that the apostle refers. The word translated *power* (ἐξουσία) is quite a different word from that which means *power* (δύναμις) in the sense of force or *ability to do*. Calvin's word in his French commentary is *puissance*. But the apostle's word brings out the idea of *authority, prerogative, right*. The apostle means that God possesses the *right* to fashion, out of the same human lump, one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. In virtue of His high position as the Monarch of the universe, God has—in the estimation of the apostle—authority thus to act. He has a right to do with His own as He pleases. He is self-authorised. It is within the range of His rights to make, if He chooses, a distinction in human destinies. If the apostle's view may be accepted, God is not under obligation to confer equal honour, or equal dishonour, upon all the children of men, without distinction or exception. He will be doing no wrong although He make a difference, and fashion on His wheel one human being with high aptitudes and aims, and another with lowlier qualifications fitting for some humbler sphere.

But now we note, in the *second* place, that we are not to look upon God's prerogative or right to fashion either to honour or to dishonour as utterly unconditional. True indeed the prerogative of the literal potter over his literal clay may, so far as his relations to his fellow men are

concerned, be absolute. He may do with it what he pleases, even although the thing which he pleases may be ridiculous, absurd, injurious to himself, and ultimately ruinous to the success of his affairs. He may, if he chooses, by adding capriciously foreign admixtures and inappropriate ingredients, spoil his clay for all but ignoble vessels; or he may stupidly attempt to make fine vessels out of coarse clay. He may misshape his vessels, if he chooses, and as he chooses. He may mar them all while they are in his hands, if he pleases; or, if he prefer it, he may wait till the whole batch are fashioned, and dried, and hardened in the kiln, and then he may take an iron rod, if he pleases, and dash them into shivers. If the clay be his own, and the wheel be his own, and the time be his own, and the rod be his own, he may act as absurdly as he pleases with his vessels. He has an absolute prerogative over his clay,—a right to do with it as he pleases, provided he do no injury, by his freaks, to men round about him.

But then in the *third* place, this absolute right of the human potter is not fitted to shield him from the free, unsparing criticism of his fellow men. They may not indeed interfere between him and his clay, and say, “*No; this won’t be permitted. You are ill-using your clay. We won’t allow it.*” They may not feel at liberty, or be at liberty, to act thus. But certainly they



would be at perfect liberty to say of the man, what Jonathan Edwards said of the devil, "that he is one of the greatest fools and blockheads in the world." ("Miscellaneous Observations." *Works*, edit. 1839, vol. ii., p. 612.)

It should be noted in the *fourth* place, that while, in some important respects, men in their relation to God are like the clay on the potter's wheel, they are not like clay in all respects; and in particular, they are unlike it in this very special respect, that *they are possessed of rights*. All men indeed are little, feeble, and dependent. But still *they have rights*; and he who denies that they have is a slanderer, witting or unwitting, at once of men's real nature and of God's real character. Man has a right, for instance, to be treated with justice. He is wronged if he be treated unjustly. He has a right to be furnished with ability to do his duty, if he is to be held responsible for not doing it. He would be wronged if this ability were withheld from him. Man has a right to have the gate of heaven opened wide before him, or at least held ajar for him, *if* he is to be blamed for not entering in. Both God and men have rights because they are moral beings, possessed at once of intelligence and of freedom of will. Man must have some power of formative self-control "unto honour," if he is to be blamed for being fashioned into a vessel "unto dishonour."

All this being the case, it is obvious that God's prerogative over the human clay is not utterly unconditional. His right to do with it as He pleases is, by His own benevolent arrangement, modified and limited by the rights which He has conferred on His human creatures. He has not reserved to Himself the right to do wrong. The idea of such a reservation is infinitely absurd and blasphemous.

It cannot be the case then, that God has reserved to Himself the right to deal maliciously, or cruelly, or tyrannically, with His poor feeble human creatures. If human creatures are to be held by Him as responsible for the shape which their character assumes, then something or other is due to them as the basis of their accountability. That is, they are, as contradistinguished from mere clay, in possession of rights; and thus, by the very existence of *their rights*, God's own rights are not utterly unconditioned. He has Himself conditioned them by conferring rights on His human creatures.

All this being the case, we now note, in the *fifth* place, that it would be a mistake to quote this statement of the apostle in support of the doctrine of unconditional reprobation. We cannot indeed entirely object to the idea of reprobation. There are beings that need to be reprobated. There are human beings who deserve universal reprobation, and who therefore deserve

Divine reprobation. Neither can we object to the idea of future retribution, and of such future retribution as cannot be thought of but with the most tremulous solemnity and awe. But we ask liberty to object to the idea of absolutely unconditional reprobation, or such reprobation as is absolutely unprovoked and undeserved.

It is right indeed to magnify the sovereignty of God. But it should not be forgotten that there is more in the circle of divinity than sovereignty. There is justice too; there is righteousness; there is holiness; there is graciousness, goodness, wisdom, mercy, love. It would be a strange inversion of theology to hold in abeyance these, the moral contents of the character of God, for the purpose of making infinite room for the one relationship of sovereignty. Such inversion of theology would be akin, in philosophic monstrosity, to the wild political aphorism of a former age, that *monarchs reigned by Divine right, and could do no wrong*.

But what then, in the *sixth* place, was the apostle's aim in proposing his query, "*Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make, out of the same lump, one vessel to honour and another to dishonour?*" Why should he be solicitous to show that God has the right to turn some of the human race into a condition of dishonour, even as He has the right to turn others on His wheel into a state of glory, honour, and bliss? The

reason is this: he is discussing in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of this epistle the relation of his countrymen to the gospel and to Jesus. Alas! the great mass of them were unbelieving. They rejected the true Messiah, the Prince of life, the only Mediator between God and sinful men, whose name is the only name given under heaven among men, whereby they may be saved. What then? If they should persist in their rejection and rebellion, what was to become of them? Would they, notwithstanding, be all turned on the Divine wheel into vessels of honour and glory? The Jews themselves contended that they should and would. They were, they contended, the darlings of God. They were the chosen, the elected nation, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. It was the idolatrous Gentiles, and they only, who were to be fashioned into vessels unto dishonour; not the Jews, if they remained true Jews. Not they. God would be unfaithful, they contended, were He thus to deal with them. They were the children of Abraham, and therefore they were the children and the heirs of God. It was glory only to which they were destined.

Thus they reasoned; thus they dreamed. But "No," says the apostle. "You are wrong, my countrymen. It is with the intensest sorrow of spirit that I say it. You are entirely wrong. It is the penitent only and the believing, whether

Jews or Gentiles, who shall be saved. And God, the almighty Potter, who has us all on His wheel, has power and prerogative and right, out of the same lump both of Jews and Gentiles, to turn one man, even though he be a Gentile, provided he be penitent and believing, into a vessel to glory, and to turn another, even though he be a Jew, provided he be unbelieving and impenitent, into a vessel to dishonour."

The apostle had evidently in his eye the representation that occurs in the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah. If a vessel becomes marred in the hands of the potter, then, instead of proceeding with it according to the original desire and design, he may crush the clay together, and fashion it into another kind of vessel altogether, as seems good to him. The Jewish people, for instance, were put upon the almighty Potter's wheel; and He desired to fashion them, as a people, into a glorious vessel. He began His operation accordingly, and was carefully and most skilfully proceeding with it, doing it all manner of justice, when, lo! it became marred in His hand, and He had to make it into another vessel, a vessel unto dishonour. Why? Why did He not rather, after it was marred, fashion it once more into what He originally desired, a noble vessel destined to noble uses, a vessel to honour? The reason was this: the vessel was marred, not because of any imperfection in the manipulation of the Potter, for the

almighty Potter is not liable to imperfection of manipulation, or to mistakes or blunders. It was spoiled clay that was in the Potter's hands. Some bad and coarse ingredients had been by some enemy flung in, so that only a coarser vessel than what was desired by the Potter could be made of it. Hence He fashioned it into a vessel that was fit to be used only for comparatively ignominious purposes, a vessel to dishonour. He had no alternative.

Instead of the nation of the Jews—as contemplated by Jeremiah—the Apostle Paul was considering the condition and prospects of the individuals of the nation. The salvation which he proclaimed, was a salvation not for peoples as peoples, but for persons as persons. What then was to be said of the persons of the Jews? Alas! the great majority of them were persistently unbelieving and perseveringly disobedient. What would the almighty Potter do with them? Lo! as He operates on His wheel, vessel after vessel, and vessel after vessel, are marred in His hand. They do not turn out as He desired. Hence it is that, while He joyfully fashions some men into vessels to honour, He feels mournfully constrained to turn others into vessels to dishonour. The Lord is not willing that any should perish. That is, He does not wish, out of this particular lump, to have any vessels fashioned and shaped for a destiny of dishonour. He would have all to be



beautiful, and honourably serviceable ; that is, He would have all the vessels He is fashioning, the whole set of them, to be vessels unto honour. He would have all men everywhere to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Speaking in the person and through the lips of Jesus, He says to the wilfully impenitent, "*I would : but ye would not.*" And just because they would not, they spoiled the good clay that was in the almighty Potter's hand, so that there was no alternative. The vessels which He had graciously desired to fashion after His own sublime ideal being marred and spoiled by human folly, He must needs—if He would utilize the precious clay at all—put it on His wheel and fashion it bit after bit into vessels to dishonour. It is the great moral alternative, all-glorious to God.

IX.—A PRACTICAL EXCURSUS ON CHRIST A STUMBLING-STONE AND ROCK OF COLLISION. (Ver. 33.)

*"It is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a Stumbling-stone and a Rock of collision ; and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed."*

These are astounding words. Their import overflows with something terrific. They tell us of a stumbling-stone and a rock of collision ! "Behold," says one, "I lay it in Zion."

Who is it that thus speaks ? What is it that

is the stumbling-stone and rock of collision? Who are they that have stumbled? And what is meant when it is sweetly, consolingly, sublimely added, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed"?

We shall endeavour to answer these several questions in their order.

First then, who is it that says, "Behold, *I* lay in Sion a Stumbling-stone and Rock of collision"? Is it Paul? That cannot be; Paul only quotes from Isaiah? Is it Isaiah then? That cannot be. He only saw it from afar, and persons and peoples were stumbling on it in dreadful collision. A greater than Isaiah, a mightier than Paul, is here. Who is it?

Isaiah explicitly informs. The apostle's quotation from the prophet is a blend of two distinct passages. The one is found in the twenty-eighth chapter of his prophecies, verse 16: "*Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place*" (the insufficient refuge). The other passage is found in the eighth chapter, verses 11, 13 to 16. "*For the Lord spake thus to me, . . . Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself* (have high ideas of His

purity and righteousness); and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread. And He shall be for a sanctuary (for a refuge); but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of collision to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."

It is the Lord God then, Jehovah, who says, "Behold, I lay in Sion a Stumbling-stone and Rock of collision." It is One therefore who has a right to speak great and terrible things. He dwelleth in His own immensity, and liveth in His own eternity. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say to Him, complainingly, What doest Thou?" "Behold," says He, "I lay in Sion a stone of stumbling and a rock of collision."

What then is this "stone of stumbling and rock of collision"? This was our second question. And in reply I would say that, whatever it be, it is that which is also "for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation stone." It is that which is for a sanctuary, for a refuge.

What then is this? Or, rather, who is this? Yes, who is this? It is a grand living Personality that is referred to. It is Jehovah Himself. It is Jehovah, "strong and mighty"—Jehovah,

“the King of Glory.” It is indeed none else than *Jehovah-Jesus*. “Sanctify and magnify”—says a voice from heaven—“the Lord of hosts Himself.” That is, *sanctify and magnify Jehovah-Jesus*. Make Him your sanctuary and refuge. Set Him sublimely apart; “let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your Dread”; let Him be your *only* Fear and Dread, and “He shall be for a sanctuary,” for a refuge; but also—mark it—“for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of collision to both the houses of Israel.”

The language is highly figurative. But it is exceedingly graphic and instructive. The mind that studies to get behind its figures will be amply repaid for its pains, if it succeeds in deciphering the grand but portentous hieroglyphs, and if it can grasp the great realities that are so vividly shadowed forth.

When *Jehovah-Jesus* then is represented under the alternative figure of a refuge and a stone of stumbling and rock of collision, the expression obviously implies that *men need a refuge*. They do indeed. Men everywhere. The men round about Sion of old needed one. The men about Sion in Isaiah’s days, and thereafter in Paul’s days, needed a refuge. Men in Great Britain need the same. Men in France, Rome, Egypt, China, India,—all need a refuge.

But why? It is because men everywhere are pursued. They are pursued by penal evils.

Every individual man is thus pursued. Every family is pursued, every nation, by hosts of penal evils.

Why is this? How comes it to pass that in the dominion of Him whose name is Love, and whose tender mercies are over all His works,—how is it that, under the rule of infinite wisdom and infinite goodness, the whole world and every particular nation in it, and every individual in every nation, all, all are pursued by penal evils? Why is it that penal evils without number are treading on the heels of men everywhere?

It is because men everywhere are themselves pursuing after evils of another kind. Men everywhere are pursuing after moral evils. Hence it is that penal evil is in return pursuing all men everywhere. All the world over we see men bending their energies in the pursuit of moral evil. They love supremely “the lust of the flesh,” it may be, and they are keenly pursuing after it. Or they love supremely “the lust of the eye,” and they are keenly pursuing after it. Or, it may be, they love supremely the vain-glory and pride of life, and they are keenly pursuing after it. One man is making life subordinate to the ignoble pursuit of sensual indulgence. Others pursue with inordinate eagerness fame or power, while myriads more pursue after wealth, as the means of gratifying some pre-

dominant and more subtle passion. But whatever the peculiar phase of moral evil may be, and whether it be something that is altogether evil in itself, or something that is only evil in its excess, alas! all the world are more or less infected by it, and attracted to it, and pursuing after it. It seems as if men everywhere are bent on obtaining some sinful gratification or other.

But the earth, on which men live, belongs to God, and He has therefore a right to rule in it and over it. Having this right, and being "holy, holy, holy," His malediction—as opposed to His benediction—is lying on every form of sinful gratification. It is lying, as befits His universal magistracy, on every form of moral evil, so that it is His infinitely wise, infinitely righteous, and infinitely benevolent will that every one who pursues any form of moral evil shall become himself pursued by penal evil. Penal evil is the dark shadow of moral evil. In one form or another it is the invariable consequent of sin. Hence every nation under the sun is pursued by a host of evils. All the great nations of the earth are, time after time, driven almost to their wit's end to devise schemes by means of which they may contrive to stave off for a season these evils.

In vain. But what then is to become of each immortal man? What is to become of the great nations of Europe? what of the great world as a



whole, eager in the pursuit of sweet indulgences and other moral evils?

Let us hear the voice of God. "Behold," says He, "I lay in Sion a stone, a tried stone, and *it* shall be for a refuge." That is, *Jehovah-Jesus is for a refuge*. Every nation's refuge is in Him, and is He. Our world's refuge is in Him, and is He. There is refuge for all in Him, but in Him only. Jehovah-Jesus, when interpreted aright and truly understood, is found to be "the Desire" of the whole world. When we go to the heart of the human heart, then that which all nations desire, and which every individual in the whole world longingly, but too often, alas! indefinitely, yearns after, is in Jesus. Refuge is in Jesus, in Jesus alone. There is "no other name under heaven given among men," whereby sinners can be saved from their penal evils, and whereby the world can be saved from its penal and moral evils, "but the name of Jesus." He is "the Saviour of the world." Never until the world turn to Him and take refuge *on* Him, or *in* Him, will it be a happy and prosperous world. Never until nations turn to Him, and arrange all their affairs in conscious relationship to His desires, will they be steadily happy and prosperous. And as the world is but a world-ful of individuals, as nations are but clusters and masses of men, never will individual men be, to their hearts' contentment, happy and

prosperous in time and for eternity, until they turn to Jehovah-Jesus and flee to Him, and take refuge in Him. He is the only refuge and safe asylum of sinful humanity.

But why then is He called, in the words before us, "a stumbling-stone and a rock of collision"? Is a stumbling-stone a refuge? Is a rock of collision an asylum and sanctuary? Undoubtedly it is. It is just according as Jehovah-Jesus is made use of by us, that He will be found to be either, on the one hand, a refuge and asylum and sanctuary, or, on the other, a stone of stumbling and rock of collision. That which is the greatest boon, when rightly used, may become our utter ruin when abused. Take fire, for instance, one of the greatest terrestrial blessings. If a man will insist on leaping into a blazing furnace, the fire will be to him instant destruction. Take water, another of our chief terrestrial blessings. If a man will plunge into a seething flood, he will find instantaneously a watery grave. Look at steam engines; they have wonderfully revolutionised for the better all commerce, and multiplied almost indefinitely the world's means of obtaining the comforts of life: but if a man will rush into the machinery when it is in full operation, all the world's comforts will in one moment cease to be comforts available to him.

The same principle holds good in the relation of Jehovah-Jesus to men. If they use Him

aright, He will prove to be a refuge, an asylum, a retreat, a sanctuary. If they will not use Him aright, but insist on going on *as if He were not in existence at all*, then He will be to them a stone of stumbling and rock of dreadful collision; and they will rush upon Him and fall, and be broken and ruined.

According to the metaphor that is embedded in the words of the prophet, men, having been guilty of *moral evil*, are pursued by a flood of penal evil. The floodgates of the Divine opposition to sin have been opened, and wrath like a whelming torrent, penal evil like a deluge, rushes onward upon men! What shall they do? They must flee for their lives. They must run to some refuge or other, or they will be overtaken, swept away, overwhelmed, and destroyed.

Men *are* running. They *are* fleeing hither and thither to find refuge from penal evil. All without exception. All are eagerly striving, in one way or another, to escape those sufferings which are the penal awards of sin. Individual persons are thus fleeing as fast as they can from penal evil. Nations too are often fleeing, as eagerly and swiftly as panic can impel, from penal evil; for as nations consist of individuals, who act sinfully in society as well as apart, nations incur penalties on account of their sins. But as they love not sufferings, they seek to escape from them. They try hard to avoid them. Every

nation runs and flees to get out of their way, as they come avengingly on. Such is the similar condition of all nations upon the earth and of all individuals in all nations.

God however has had marvellous mercy on all nations and men. He has provided a refuge. He has "laid in Zion a Stone"—and not in Zion only, but in Britain too, and in every nation,—“a great stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation-stone, a rock.” It is “the Rock of ages.” Whosoever flees to it, in mind and soul and heart; flees, believing God’s testimony regarding Jesus to be true; whosoever thus flees to Jesus settles on the Rock. He rests upon it and is safe. When the flood of vengeance comes on apace, all who are on the Rock of ages, all who have foothold there will be in perfect security; and the torrent will rush past. Those who are on the Stone will find it to be “the Rock of their salvation.”

But, alas! the great majority of Jews, the great majority of Britons, the great majority of all other peoples on the face of the earth, scorn thus to make use of Jehovah-Jesus. Men in general disdain to bethink themselves, and to avail themselves of Jehovah-Jesus, and of His refuge. Onward they run, “making haste,” onward after happiness, onward and away from the penal evil that is hotly pursuing them, onward thus they run *without ever thinking of Jehovah-Jesus.*

They pour contempt upon the notion that anything that Jehovah-Jesus did can be the means by which they are to escape wrong and to reach the enjoyment of bliss. They expect to escape woes—all the woes that are the penal consequences of selfishness—by a still more determined and indomitable pursuit of selfishness. Onward, onward they madly run, ignoring altogether the finished work of Jehovah-Jesus, treating it as if it were a mere nonentity or absolute nullity.

What is the consequence? Paul says concerning his countrymen, “they stumbled on the stumbling-stone”; and the masses of all other peoples are in this matter as were the masses of the Jews—“they stumble on the stumbling-stone.” They come into dreadful collision with the Rock that might have been their Refuge. They who will not use Jehovah-Jesus as a Refuge-Rock must run foul of Him as “a Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of collision.”

The Divine idea is this : if men will have none of Jesus, if they will despise the propitiation, the prepared work of Jesus, and run on in their way without deigning to look so lowly or so low as to see Jesus, the interests which they pursue must come into terrific collision with the interests which He pursues ; and whensoever the collision takes place, they, and they only, will suffer. They will be like fugitives from a flood, who dash with all their highest pressure of force full on, upon a

stone, and stumble on a jagged rock. The stone, the rock, will remain uninjured; but they will fall and be broken, and the flood will overtake and overwhelm them. They will be miserably ruined and destroyed. Such is the doom of all antichristian persons. Such is the doom of all antichristian confederations and institutions and policies and peoples. Great and terrible will be the day of retribution.

But there is a sweet addition to the portentous threatening: "Whosoever believeth on Him (Him the Rock of ages) shall not be ashamed." Almost all men are expecting, notwithstanding their selfishness, and indeed by means of it, to be happy. They fancy that they will dexterously escape from the overflowing flood of penal evil that is sweeping along in the direction of eternity. Alas! they forget that God has not abdicated, and that every man is accountable to Him. Penal evil cannot always be staved off from nations; and though it be to a degree staved off from individual men in time, it cannot by any act or effort be always kept at bay by the impenitent. The hopes of the antichristian will thus, some day or other, give up the ghost. Antichristians, who have entertained these hopes, will be disenchanted, disappointed, and ashamed. But he who has built his hope of escape upon "the Stone, the tried Stone, the precious corner Stone, the sure foundation," the Rock, the Rock of ages, the



work of Christ, he who has found his refuge there, is in the great sanctuary, and shall not be disappointed. His security, his salvation is certain. The rain may descend, the floods may roll and rush, the winds may blow and beat upon the Rock on which the refugee reposes: but his hopes will not fail, for they are founded upon the Rock. He that believeth will not need to "make haste," or, to put it otherwise, he who believeth will never be "disappointed," and hence he will never be "ashamed" before his God, before his fellow men at large, and before his own conscience.



## THE JEWS AND THE GOSPEL.

### AN EXPOSITION OF ROMANS X.

VER. 1. *Brethren!* The apostle in this word characterises the persons to whom his letter was addressed, and for whose benefit, primarily, the discussions which are contained in it were instituted. They were his *brethren*; that is, his *spiritual brethren*. Both he and they belonged to a great spiritual brotherhood, the members of which were most intimately related to one another in love. They were drawn close to each other by the centralising influence of Jesus at the heart. The apostle wished to carry the judgment of his brethren with him, when he felt constrained to speak plainly and sadly in reference to the great body of his countrymen. *My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Instead of the expression "for Israel," the modern critical editions read "for *them*," the reference being obviously to the people signalled in the last three verses of the preceding chapter. "Israel" would get substituted for the pronoun, when it became a custom to commence a congregational lection at this particular part of the epistle.

The expression, *my heart's desire*, would be more literally rendered *the goodwill of my heart*. The word *εὐδοκία*, which is translated *desire* in our public English version, is not found in classical writers. But it occurs not infrequently in the *Septuagint* and the *New Testament*, and it is expressly rendered *goodwill* in Luke ii. 14 and in Philippians i. 15. It is correspondingly rendered *good pleasure* in Ephesians i. 5, 9, Philippians ii. 13, and 2 Thessalonians i. 11. The apostle means that it would impart *the liveliest gratification to his heart*, if his countrymen were to be saved. His pleasure in that matter was a lofty benevolence. It was *good-pleasure, good-will*. There was *will*, as well as *wish*, in it; but this *will* or *wish* was *good*. The apostle's word, though not simply meaning *desire*, nevertheless carried desire within its bosom, and is not, in this place, and so far as our English language is concerned, unhappily represented by that term. *His prayer to God for them was, that they might be saved*; or, it might be represented thus, *and the prayer which I present to God in their behalf (is) for their salvation*. It is assumed that his countrymen had invariably a warm place in his heart when he was offering his sacrifice of supplications. He did not forget to spread out their case before God. But he did not content himself with offering up indefinite intercessions. There was one particular point toward which his peti-

tions in his countrymen's behalf converged, and that point was *their salvation*. It was *that* which he most earnestly desired, and for *that* he most urgently pleaded. Not that he would desire it, or ask for it, unconditionally. That could not be, more especially in the case of a man like the apostle, with great breadth of mind and soul, and the loftiest reverence in his heart for God. Momentous as salvation is, there are things which, in importance, transcend even the *saving of sinners*.

It may here be noted, that it would be difficult to vindicate the apostle's importunity at the throne of grace for the salvation of his countrymen at large if it were indeed the case that, in the immediately preceding chapter, he had been consciously, and with elaborate argumentation, demonstrating that it is the secret will of God that only a remnant of them should be saved.

The proper position for the unexpressed substantive verb requires to be considered. Shall we put it before, or shall we put it after, the expression, *in their behalf?* (ὕπὲρ αὐτῶν.) King James's translators put it after; the English Revisers have put it before. We agree with the former, though in truth the difference between the two representations is somewhat shadowy.

Ver. 2. *For I testify in reference to them that*

*they have zeal toward God ; but not according to knowledge.*

Their zeal, not being intelligent, was not guided by knowledge. It was led, and led astray, by ignorance. Its existence, however, was so far creditable. Better to have zeal toward God, even although it should be tinged with fanaticism, and to that degree be marred, than to have no zeal at all except for self. Hence the apostle's regard for his countrymen. In their souls,—blurred and turned awry though these were,—they had “some soul of good.” The phrase *zeal of God*, as meaning *zeal in reference to God*, may be illustrated by the forcible expression in Psalm lxix. 9, which was applied to our Lord by His disciples, “The *zeal of Thine house* hath eaten me up”; that is, “*zeal ‘for’ Thy house* hath consumed me.” *It hath devoured me.*

Ver. 3. The apostle proceeds to show the unintelligent nature of their zeal for God.

*For, not knowing the righteousness of God, and seeking to set up their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.*

They were culpably ignorant of it. The reference cannot be to God's essential righteousness, or that righteousness in virtue of which He Himself is spotlessly righteous. The Jews were unanimous in holding that God is “holy, holy, holy,”



and absolutely "righteous." There was no dispute between them and the apostle as regards the personal righteousness of God.

To what then does he make reference?

It must be to some righteousness of God that may have over against it *a kind of rival righteousness*, to which some might accord a preference. Let the antithesis in the apostle's representation be observed: *They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to set up their own righteousness*. If the reference, in the first clause of this antithesis, were to the righteousness that is essentially inherent in the ethical character of God, how could it ever be imagined that any Jews or Gentiles would or could set up, in opposition and rivalry, any righteousness of their own?

*The righteousness of God* referred to by the apostle is manifestly the same Divine righteousness that is spoken of in verse 30 of the preceding chapter, where we read, "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, *have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.*" That which is called, in chapter x. 3, *the righteousness of God* is, in chapter ix. 30, designated *the righteousness of faith*. It is a righteousness which may be obtained *by faith in the gospel of God's grace*; and it is thus a righteousness which may become a characteristic of man.

It is the righteousness which is referred to in

Philippians iii. 9, "where the apostle expresses his longing to win Christ," and "be found in Him, not having," says he, "*mine own righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is obtained *through faith in Christ*," the righteousness which is from God, and conditioned, as regards its acceptance by man, on faith (ἐκ Θεοῦ, ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει).

It is signalised in Romans iii. 20–22 in the words, "Now the righteousness of God without law has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even *the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe*." It is God's unspeakable gift to men, without distinction or exception.

Compare also what is said in Romans i. 16, 17, where the apostle represents the gospel as the mighty moral lever of God to lift up the fallen children of men, because therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, even as it is written in Habakkuk ii. 4, "the righteous by faith"—the man who has got hold of righteousness by faith, even the righteousness of God,—*he* "shall live." This is the good news that something has been graciously provided for us out of God's infinite bounty,—something which is gloriously fitted to be to us, for salvation, in the place of perfect personal righteousness.

This was *the righteousness of God*, of which the

apostle's countrymen were culpably "ignorant," because they persisted in closing their eyes and shutting their ears. It had been clearly proclaimed to them in the gospel. But they sought to dispense with it, and to make a pathway for themselves. They persisted in thinking that if they carefully observed their ceremonies, and punctiliously tithed their mint, anise, and cummin, even although they omitted the weightier matters of the Divine law, their righteousness, thus wrought out, would suffice. Vain imagination! It was passing strange that they did not see that this righteousness was but another and a whitewashed name for unrighteousness. They needed to be saved from it. It was not a pure and spotless "garment of salvation," but something to be cast off and abhorred, a leprous robe. It did not defend, or adorn, or ennoble the soul. They should have known that the true wedding-garment which gives the guest a title to the marriage-supper of bliss, is the righteousness woven throughout in the loom of the life of "Jesus Christ the righteous." The cry of all the ages should be, "*None but Christ!*" *He is the Lord our righteousness!*" Every Luther will exclaim, "I am His sin, and He is my righteousness." Every Paul will exclaim, "Yea doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: that I may win Him, and be found in Him, not having

*mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God through faith."* Jehovah-Jesus is "the righteousness of God" for unrighteous men. He is, that is to say, "the Lord our righteousness." *But they did not subject themselves:* they should have voluntarily surrendered themselves to the imperial influence of the atoning righteousness of God. But they did not. Their *faith* would have been *obedience*. Their *unbelief* was *disobedience*. It was either the defiant rejection, or it was the defiant neglect of the great salvation.

Ver. 4. In this verse the apostle gives a glimpse into the essence and the genesis of the saving righteousness of God.

*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth.*

The emphasis is resting, not so much on the word *Christ*, as on the expression, *end of law*; or, as it may be presented, "*the*" *end of law*, or "*the*" *end of "the" law*. "None but Christ," indeed, could be to us *the end of law*. But the apostle is not so anxious to accord to Christ the fulness of His pre-eminence, as he is desirous of holding up to view the great Divine fact finished on Calvary by the Christ, that there might be provision for human salvation. Hence

the transposition of the predicate of the proposition into the place of the subject. Instead of saying, *For Christ is end of law*, there is a significant *bouleversement* of order, *For end of law is Christ*. Taken either way the statement is remarkable, and its meaning may be most effectively reached by means of some other statements lying on the same line of idea. For instance, there is the statement in chapter vi. 15, "What then? Shall we sin because we are *not under law*, but under grace?" There is to believers an "end of law," and that end is a thing of grace. There is also the statement in chapter vii. 2, "Know ye not that the law has dominion over a man *as long as he lives*, and verse 4, "Ye are *dead to the law* through the body of Christ." See also Galatians ii. 19, 20, "*I died through the law to the law*, that I might live to God: *I have been crucified with Christ*: but I live; though no longer I myself, but Christ liveth in me." To men believing in the crucified Christ there is an *end of law*. The law indeed had dominion over them as long as they lived, or remained uncrucified with Christ; but, being believers in the Christ who died, they too died in the Christ, and are no longer "under the law." It has no longer legislative authority to come to them, with any one of its distinctive precepts and its awful sanctions, and to say, *Do this, and live! Do this, or die!* When they believed, they "died to the law through the body of Christ,"

in whose death they are dead. There is thus an "end of the law" in Christ. So far as eternal—æviternal—penalty is concerned, Jesus terminated the law. "It is finished." And His aim in the entire transaction has been the "impetration" of "righteousness for every one who believeth."

Ver. 5. The apostle proceeds to make a distinction in reference to the indispensable righteousness that is the *causa meritoria* of enduring bliss. He begins by saying, *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them*; or, as it is given in the Revised Version, *For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live thereby*. The Revised Version is founded on the critical reading of Tischendorf as accepted by Westcott and Hort. It certainly simplifies the construction exceedingly, if indeed not too exceedingly. For if such were the original reading, one might wonder that there should ever have been any divergences among the early readers and transcribers of the epistle. Lachmann and Tregelles did not accept the full tale of the modifications that have approved themselves to Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort. Of this however we may be assured, that the text, as given by these latest critics, exhibits the idea that was strug-



gling for expression in the apostle's mind. And if he said, according to the reading of the Erasmian text, that *Moses "writeth the righteousness" which is of the law*, when he wrote that *the man who did those things shall live by them*, he really meant, however perplexed the order of his words, that the great lawgiver's writing is to the effect, that *if a man has "done" the statutes of God, he shall live by his doing*. It is, for all practical purposes, an admirable description of that righteousness which consists of personal obedience to law, the righteousness of merit, the righteousness of perfect goodness or holiness, the righteousness of ministry and love. The expression, *shall live by them*, is literally *shall live in them*. He shall find in the things done the roots of enduring life. In the reading accepted by the Revisers, *shall live thereby*, i.e. *shall live by it*, literally *shall live "in" it*, the reference is to the righteousness which consists in the sum of the righteous things done. In that righteousness, if real, there is life,—life throughout the normal time for life, whether the lifetime be that of a person or of a people.

Ver. 6. In antithesis to this ideal righteousness of law, the apostle proceeds to delineate that other and real and infinitely meritorious righteousness which brims with hope for the

unrighteous children of men, but which was strangely repugnant to the masses of his countrymen.

*But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh thus, Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into the heaven? that is, to bring Christ down.*

The apostle employs a strong personification, investing the "righteousness which is of faith" with powers of speech in general, and of discriminative and persuasive speech in particular. The personified object is represented as "*of*" faith, that is, "*from*" faith (ἐκ πίστεως). Not that it originates "*in*" faith, or is identical "*with*" faith. It is conveyed to the soul of the recipient "*by*" faith. The soul thus gets it "*from*" faith. It is made known in the gospel; and the righteousness thus revealed and obtained is the same that is elsewhere represented as *from God*, to be enjoyed by man *on condition of faith* (ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει). If it were gifted with perspicacity and speech, it would address each man dissuasively, and somewhat as follows: "Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into the heaven? That is, to bring Christ down." No such mightily straining effort on the part of the spiritually necessitous is required. Men who have fallen into unrighteousness can be lifted up again. It is a great work. But it is not to be effected by some supernatural effort on the part of men themselves. They do not need, for instance, to

soar aloft into sky beyond sky in order to find Christ, and to induce Him to come down to the earth to achieve what is required for human salvation. Supernatural forthputting of energy is indeed indispensable. But it has already been put forth by One to whom the supernatural is natural, and who is "mighty to save to the uttermost." The apostle weaves the woof of the utterances of his personified pleader into the warp of some grand oratorical pleading addressed by Moses to the Israelites on the eve of his disappearance within the obscuring veil. (See Deut. xxx. 11-14.)

Ver. 7. An alternative is oratorically introduced, not identical with that which was laid down by Moses in Deuteronomy xxx. 13, but yet substantially parallel.

*Or who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.*

Moses spoke of "going over the sea." But the apostle, for his peculiar purpose, modifies and intensifies the representation. He desired to make the way plain for introducing a reference to Christ's resurrection; and hence he speaks of the world of the deceased, representing it, in one of its awesome aspects, as an *abyss*. Will it be needful to go down into that dismal region, which, as "bottomless," has never been explored

by human travellers? *Say not, Who shall make this terrible descent?*

Ver. 8. *But what says it? Near thee is the word, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach.*

The personified Righteousness continues to speak, and, as it speaks, it draws attention to *the word* in which it is conveyed to the soul. In Deuteronomy xxx. 11–14, it is not *Righteousness* that speaks: it is Moses himself, in the name of God. Hence there is no rhetorical personification: there is the living personality of the lawgiver. And it is with his own living voice that he specifies “the commandment which God commanded,” and says, “It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off,”—“but the word is very nigh to thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.” The “word” referred to is the commandment exhibiting the duty devolving on the Israelites. The apostle’s reference is different. The “word,” with him, is “the word of the truth of the gospel.” It is, that is to say, the gospel itself; for that is “the word of faith.” It is so called, because it is the proximate object toward which faith points, and on which it terminates. It is, says the apostle, the word *which “we” preach*. He really refers to his own personal preaching; but for the moment he realises

that he is only one of a company of heralds. He was by no means alone in his labour of love. The gospel is a "word," though not necessarily, or generally, a *mere vocable*. As there may be several *vocables* in a *word of exhortation*, so in the proclamation of the "*word*" of *faith*, or the "*word*" of *the truth of the gospel*, harmonious groups of *vocables* may be requisite. Sometimes indeed the gospel may be condensed into a single *vocable*, such as "Jesus," or "Christ," or "propitiation," or "ransom." But more frequently the single *vocable* expands itself into some such worded utterance as this, "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Let a man study till he understand this "word"; or let him even master the "*vocables*" referred to, and a great light will dawn upon his spirit. The personified pleader says of the "word," *it is near thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart*. It has been *brought near*—by proclamation, or by conversation, or by some kindred modification of instrumentality, or by some more subtle influence still, not tabulated in our categories. But, howsoever communicated, *it was in the mouths and in the hearts of the apostle's countrymen*. And it is *in our mouths too, and in our hearts*. Men heedlessly utter gospel words with their mouths; and, both before and after the utterance, the words are in the heart or

mind. Like other words, however, they have both a kernel and a husk : and too often is the attention occupied with the exterior to the neglect of the interior.

Ver. 9. *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

The apostle opens up analytically the contents of "the word of faith" which he preached. Hence the demonstrative import of the introductory *ὅτι*, *that* or *namely that*; not, as given by Meyer, *seeing that*, or *because*. It is the *Lord Jesus* Himself that is the kernel of "the word of faith"; and whosoever confesses Him with the mouth, and believeth on Him in the heart, shall, says the apostle, be saved. In his representation he begins with the outer, viz. *confessing with the mouth*, and thence goes back to the inner, viz. *believing with the heart*. He might have reversed the order of presentation, as indeed he does in the very next verse. For manifestly, in Christian experience, faith is the fountain, and confession the stream. Nevertheless confession is as essential as if it were first and fontal. It is the outward form of an inward reality. Just as truly as there must be a stream where there is a fountain, so there must be con-



fession where there is faith. Confession is faith uttering itself. But the utterance that is its essence is not only secondary in significance, it is also second in historical sequence. It is of the nature of a response—*confession*. One hears in it the echo of a prior utterance. The echo, in all Christian confession, is responsive to the testimony of the Spirit of God; and that testimony is the gospel.

Led by the Vatican MS., Westcott and Hort give the text thus: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth *the word that Jesus is Lord*." But it is probable that this reading, so scantily supported, owed its origin to the marginal annotation of some early owner of a MS., who was glad to take note that in *the affirmation that Jesus is Lord* there is "*the word*" so peculiarly emphasised in the preceding verse.

This emphasised "word" and "word of faith" is, as should be specially noted, a many-sided reality; and hence the apostle only selected one out of several presentations that lay close to his hand when he represented, as the object of "saving faith," the sublime and wondrous fact *that God raised our Saviour from among the dead*. Let that fact be apprehended in its momentous relations to God's justice and mercy, on the one hand, and to man's sins, sorrows, and hopes, on the other, and it will be found to have within itself all the elements of a grand ethical revolu-



tion in the soul and in the life. If Christ was really raised from among the dead by the glory of the Father (Rom. vi. 4), then assuredly the work, which received its consummation in the crucifixion, must, in its essence and its aims, have been, and must still be, well-pleasing to Him with whom we have to do; and therefore the adequate basis of spiritual security and peace to unrighteous men penitentially conscious of their unrighteousness.

Ver. 10. The apostle reiterates in epigrammatic form the asseveration of verse 9, turning at the same time his reiteration into an insistence of emphasis.

*For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

It is as if he had said, The conditions of the hypothetical case just presented to view being realised, the man will certainly be saved; “*for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*”

Note the phrase *with the heart* (καρδίᾳ). It has, like the phrase *with the mouth* (στόματι) in the clause that follows, an instrumental signification; whereas the corresponding phrase in the preceding verse (*in thy heart*) has a locative import,

denoting the locality or region in which the believing takes place.

The expression, *man believeth*, is, as Paul gave it, impersonal (*πιστεύεται*). Believing takes place, or is put forth, or is exerted, or exercised. It is thus exercised *unto righteousness*, or so that righteousness is obtained. Personal righteousness is the result. For personal *righteousness* is what man needs for full self-evolution in harmony with his moral nature. Righteousness is *moral rightness*. Things may be right; only persons can be righteous. God is absolutely righteous. The incarnated Saviour is "Jesus Christ *the righteous*." In assuming our human nature, and living in it, and working out in it day by day some part or parts of an immaculate human righteousness, He acted not for His own glory in particular, nor indeed for selfism in any phase whatever. He sought not "to be ministered unto, but to minister." It was man's benefit and bliss at which He aimed. His whole life on earth therefore, with all the ingredients of suffering that were intermingled with His labours of love, *was righteousness for men*.

It is the same righteousness which, as we have seen again and again, is spoken of in chap. i. 17; iii. 21-24; ix. 30-32; x. 3-7.

Viewed in another relationship, it is the righteousness *provided by God*—the righteousness consequently of which He makes an "un-

speakable gift" to the unrighteous children of men.

There is a parallelism in the two epigrammatic members of the proposition, like arm stretched out with arm. The second arm is this, *and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*. There is no Christian faith without Christian confession. There is no Christian confession without Christian faith. Confession is just faith turned from its obverse side to its reverse. The two sides of the precious unity are inseparable and mutually indispensable. When faith comes forth from its silence to announce itself, and to proclaim the glory and the grace of the Lord, its voice is *confession*.

The other ingredients of the parallelism are set over against one another in the words *Righteousness* and *Salvation*. They reciprocally interpenetrate. *God's righteousness*, when received by faith, becomes at once *man's salvation*; and *man's salvation* is a possibility in Divine moral government because of that *righteousness of God* which has "magnified the law and made it honourable."

In popular theology a somewhat inconsiderate use has not infrequently been made of the second member of the apophthegm, "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness." A strong distinction has been drawn, by a hard and fast line, between "believing with the *heart*" and

“believing with the *head*.” But the inspired writers did not make the distinction that we make between *head* and *heart*. With them the word *heart* was wider in its embrace. And hence we read of the *thoughts* of many hearts, and the *imaginings* of the heart. We read of men *understanding* with their heart, and *considering*, and *conceiving*, and even *reasoning* in their hearts; and of *musings*, and *saying*, and *intending* or having *intent*. We read of men whose *hearts* are *foolish*; and of other men who are *wise in heart*. The word, in its Hebrew usage, is substantially equivalent to our word *mind*. It denotes the inner man in general, viewed spiritually, and relative to the outer man. But it is to be particularly noted that here the apostle is making no distinction at all between *heart* and *head*. His distinction is explicitly between *heart* and *mouth*, and thus between *believing* and *confessing*. It is to the apostle a distinction with a very small difference; and hence his aphorism. Believing is a mode of *thinking*, not of *feeling*. It is that particular *mode of thinking* that is guided to its object by the testimony of another, or by some kind of inter-mediation. It is not intuition. The believing that is “unto righteousness” is that mode of thinking that is guided *by the testified thoughts of God*. These testified thoughts are the contents of the gospel.

Ver. 11. The salvation involved in the Divine righteousness is certain,

*For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.*

It is the same aphorism, from Isaiah xxviii. 16, that has been quoted in chapter ix. 33. There is perfect certainty and security that the believer, to whatever nationality he may belong, will be saved. He shall not be *put to shame* by being disappointed where most he trusted. The apostle does not quote direct from the Hebrew original. He quotes, though not verbatim, from the Septuagint version. The Hebrew representation is, *The believer will not make haste.* He will not be swept away in panic, when the pent up waters of vengeance burst forth. He will be safe upon the Rock of ages—a sure Foundation. Such is the Hebrew picture. The Septuagintal picture, though entirely different in form, is of identical ethical significance. The believer's safety and bliss are so secure that he will never be affronted by finding his bright anticipations belied. The Rheims version, simply reproducing the Latin Vulgate, is “*shal not be confounded.*” Conybeare's translation is, “*shall be saved from confusion.*”

Ver. 12. The apostle insists upon the universal scope and range of human salvability.

*For there is no distinction of Jew and Greek, for the same is Lord of all, being rich to all who call upon Him.*

The apostle has employed in the immediately preceding verse the expression, *whosoever*, or as it may be still more literally rendered, *every one who*. In this 12th verse he vindicates the employment of such an all-embracing phrase in reference to the Divine accessibility and graciousness. *For there is no distinction of Jew and Greek*. The Jews in general thought that there was a distinction, and that the true God was their God in particular. They had by special dotation, as they imagined, a larger share than all others of present and prospective prerogatives and blessings. They assumed that God was actuated by a spirit of partiality or favouritism, and they were sure that they were the favourites.

The apostle does not say, "*Jew and Gentile*," but "*Jew and Greek*." The two expressions are in substance identical; and it is of Gentiles, as Gentiles, that the apostle thinks. But the Greeks were distinguished representatives of the whole group of peoples who were depreciated by the Jews. They were, says Este, "*species nominatissima*."

There are two ways of construing the remainder of the verse. (1) The way that is taken in King James's version, *for the same Lord over all (is) rich to all that call upon Him*; and (2) the



way that is taken by the English Revisers, *for the same Lord (is) Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call on Him*. In the former construction the subject of the proposition is *the same Lord over all*, and the predicate consists of the remainder of the verse. In the latter, the subject is simply *the same*, that is, *the same (Lord)*, and the predicate is the twofold declaration, (1) *is Lord of all*, and (2) *is rich to all who call upon Him*. There should be no doubt, in presence of the participle ( $\pi\lambda\omicron\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}\nu$ ), that this latter location of the unexpressed substantive verb is the correct construction. We could not with propriety say, as if it were a complete, self-contained affirmation, *For the same Lord of all, "being" rich to all who call upon Him*. In making such a participial statement, we should, in taking one step, be vainly waiting for another. But with the utmost propriety we can say, *For the same (Lord) is Lord of all, "being" rich to all who call on Him*. The participle prolongs the asseveration, and in our English idiom it may with advantage be analytically spread out thus, *and is rich*, or thus, *who is rich*. The word *Lord* is doubtless to be taken here in its ordinary Old Testament usage as the designation of Him who is *Yahveh* or *Jehovah*. It is not so used in antithesis to *the Lord Jesus Christ*. There is no antithesis intended, and most assuredly no intention of putting the Saviour into some secondary or subordinate



sphere of subsistence. It is the one true and plural God who is referred to, and who is at once *Lord and God*. The fulness of the Godhead,—the fulness of Godhood,—is in Him, whether we view Him absolutely, as living His own eternity in His own immensity, or as graciously manifesting Himself in the person, the personal character, and the personal work and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. This God the Lord is *Lord of all men everywhere*. He is their liege-Lord and absolute Suzerain. It is a blessing to them that they stand in such a relation to Him. Unlike many petty princes—petty in reality, though high and haughty in their own overweening imaginations—He is “rich to all who call upon Him.” The word *rich* is here used in its ethical import, as equivalent to *liberal* or *bountiful*. Hence the remarkable expression, *rich unto*, or *rich to*. In the sphere of ordinary life, when men become *rich*, they are in general simply said, absolutely, to be *rich*. At times it may be said that they are *rich in* this world’s possessions, or that they are *rich in* the possession of devoted friends, or *rich in* mental imagery, it may be, or in genius; *rich in thought*. But God is here represented as *rich unto*. It is the *riches of benevolence* that are spoken of. He is “abundant in goodness.” He is rich in grace, compassion, mercy, tender mercy, forgiving mercy, *to all who call upon Him*. They call upon

*Him*, in their own behalf (ἐπικαλουμένων), to help them, to befriend them, to save them. They call upon Him by name, and He hearkens. They invoke Him, and He answers and delivers them. Such calling is one important aspect of their heart's desire.

Ver. 13. The apostle fortifies his statement by quoting a favourite aphorism found in Joel ii. 32, *For whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

The *for* is no part of the quotation, but is the apostle's logical method of introducing the aphorism into his discourse. *Whosoever*, be he who he may, whatever his nationality, *shall call—or, should call—on the name of the Lord*, and thus call upon the Lord Himself by name. The mere name would be a “tinkling cymbal,” “vox et præterea nihil.” But when we call upon persons, it is customary, for the sake of discrimination, to make use of their names. We think of things and persons by their names, or by some circuitous method of the mind equivalent to nomenclature. We speak too of persons, as of things, by means of their names. *Shall be saved.* It was “great salvation” which the prophet had in view, and most definitely was it “the great salvation” that was contemplated by the apostle. To him it was the salvation which runs on into

eternity. Its foretastes here are but little parts and parcels of its infinite reality. The words of the prophet were words that were susceptible of “germinescent fulfilment.” Their “fulfilments” are “going on continually” (*Bacon*).

Ver. 14. Nothing is more natural and more fitting, in the perilous condition of unrighteous men, than calling for help on the Lord. But the apostle realised that certain intellectual and practical preliminaries are indispensable.

*Then*, i.e. it being the case that any of the children of men, whatever be their nationality, may be saved by calling on the Lord, *how shall they call?—how should they call?—how could they call?* (ἐπικαλέσωνται, not ἐπικαλέσονται)—on Him in whom they have not believed? Literally: to whom they believed not? to whom their faith did not extend? Without faith in the Lord’s existence, and power, and grace, their calling could have no “occasioning cause,” and thus no pillar of support on which to rest. *And how shall they, or should they, or could they, believe in Him of whom they have not heard?* Some testimony, or what is equivalent to a testimony, is indispensable in order to intelligent faith. A report, or what is equivalent to a report, is necessary. In Greek it could be idiomatically said “whom” they heard not. But in English we need to say “of whom”

*they have not heard. And how shall they hear without a preacher?* If the report is about Christ or God-in-Christ, then a special reporter or preacher is required—a herald of the news. The apostle's representation is moulded, not so much on generic principles as on the specialties of the gospel, as an all-important Report, Testimony, or Heraldic Cry. His aim is exclusively practical. He has no reference to *philosophic faith*. And yet there is this in common with both faith as a method in philosophy and the special faith of the gospel, comprehending faith in Christ, that respectively they are mental conditions that lie, not on the primary line of intuition, but on the secondary line of information based on prior intuition or report.

Ver. 15. *And how shall they preach except they be sent? or, And how should they, or could they, preach, unless they were sent?*

True preachers are *apostles*, in the original sense of the term. They are missionaries; men sent out by God; men who feel that an apostolic work is devolved upon them. They have a heraldic errand to fulfil. Hence they must haste from group to group, from population to population, from person to person, as far as wisely regulated energy can reach. Thus only can they unburden their consciences in respect to the re-

sponsibility laid upon them to announce faithfully and affectionately the glad tidings of salvation.

Ver. 15, continued. *As it stands written, How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things !*

The apostle's mind seemed to acquire increasing fervour as he advanced from query to query, till, in a moment of rapture, there gleamed athwart his observation the sublime utterance of Isaiah lii. 7. He instantly seized the salient idea in the prophetic utterance, and made it his own. The cluster of exclamations is so felicitously reproduced in our English version, that it may be questioned which of the two representations, the Hebrew or the English, is the more exquisite. *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace ! that bringeth good tidings of good ! that publisheth salvation ! that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth !* It is a picture on the canvas of imagination. In a time of intense anxiety and imminent peril, many are the earnest and wistful looks that are directed toward the mountain pass in the distance. At length, when hope deferred was turning into despair, the messenger is descried. He is striding in haste, waving a token of the glad tidings he is commissioned to communicate. The *feet*, which bear him rapidly

along, are beautiful objects to behold,—beautiful to the eyes of the hopeful. In the Erasmian text the apostle appropriates a twofold announcement of glad tidings: “How beautiful the feet of them that announce the glad tidings of peace, that announce the glad tidings of good things!” Lachmann however and Tischendorf, as also Tregelles and Westcott-and-Hort, have thrown out the first of the two exclamations, as an instance of overdoing on the part of some ancient annotator or transcriber. It is wanting in  $\aleph$  A B C, and other important authorities. The repetition indeed of the word *εὐαγγελιζομένων* might lead to the omission of one of the clauses, the eye being misguided. But, on the other hand, the one exclamation seems enough for the apostle’s logical purpose; the two seem *de trop*; and at the same time it was not unnatural for some interested owner of a MS. to put in the margin so interesting an addition, in a parallelistic point of view, to the quotation. Instead of *beautiful* some very ancient interpreters, and many others besides, have given to the apostle’s term its etymological import of *timely* or *opportune* (*tempestivi*). Unnatural. The Septuagint version (*ὡς ὥρα*) is, as regards the word, still more unnatural, and far inferior to that of the apostle. Instead of the indefinite expression *good things*, Tischendorf, on insufficient evidence, reads, along with the Erasmian text, *the good things*. But



both in the Hebrew original and in the Septuagint the definite article is wanting; and its presence seems rather an intrusion.

Ver. 16. *But not all became obedient to the gospel.*

The apostle does not particularise the persons of whom he is thinking and speaking. But it is manifest that his reference is to his countrymen. It is their condition that has been giving him anxiety all along the line of his discussions from the commencement of the ninth chapter. It is their condition that is still the burden of his heart throughout the remainder of this chapter, and then throughout the whole of chapter xi. *They did not all obey the gospel; not all?* Had the people then in general obeyed? Alas! they had not, and the apostle might have said, *that it was few who yielded submission to the gospel.* But, while he is intent on the validity of his argument, he by *litotes* uses phraseology that somewhat veiled the dread arithmetical reality, but that yet was sufficiently transparent to reveal or suggest the widely extended range of his reference. The authors of the Revised Version have not, in this case, effected an improvement on the older version. They render the expression thus: *But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings.* They under-rate the

import of the verb, which they render *hearken*, and which their predecessors rendered *obeyed*. It occurs in other twenty passages of the New Testament, and in all of these, with one exception, it means *obey*, and is so rendered. The cognate noun invariably receives a corresponding cognate rendering. It is the idea of the apostle that the gospel is instinct with imperative. It claims reception of itself. Men are bound to accept it. It is the authoritative will of God that men should believe the gospel. Faith in it is a duty, as well as a privilege. Instead of *gospel* the Revisers have substituted *glad tidings*, under the impression that the apostle's mind was still strongly vibrating to the spell of Isaiah's rapture. But that rapture, apparently, only gleamed for a moment athwart the horizon of his spirit, as seems to be made manifest by the use of the word *obeyed*. The apostle is already back to his ordinary didactic and argumentative style. Undoubtedly his real reference is to *the gospel*, and to the gospel not viewed generically, but most specifically as the one gospel of salvation.

Ver. 16, continued. *For Isaiah says, Lord, who hath believed our report?* or, very literally, *who believed our report?* The spokesman in the prophet's oracle, and the apostle in his peculiar

sphere of argument, were looking back to a completed event. *Who believed our report (at the time when we made it?)* When we went to the people with our report, our message of salvation (through Christ), our glad tidings of great joy, *who believed what we proclaimed?* The believers among the Jews were few and far between, and hence “the arm of Jahveh,” which He would so willingly have stretched down to lift up, remained covered in its drapery.

The Vulgate Version is rather grotesque: *who hath believed our hearing?* (*auditui nostro.*) The Rheims Version is ineffectual in its effort to smooth the rendering: *who hath believed the hearing of us?*

Ver. 17. *So then belief (springeth) from what is reported. And what is reported (is given) through Christ's word.* Hence the apostle's countrymen should have been *believers, believers of the gospel.* It was the gospel which was the subject-matter of the all-important *report* which had been made to them. The report, being intelligible and well authenticated, should have been cordially welcomed. All intelligible and well-authenticated reports claim to be believed by those for whom they are intentionally prepared, and to whom they are legitimately sent. They are fitted in their nature to elicit belief as

regards their contents. Thus *belief springs from reports*. "The belief" specially referred to by the apostle, *the belief of the gospel*, wells up out of the very nature of the report made or the testimony given. It was the business of the apostles and their coadjutors to report the good news of finished propitiation and salvation to their countrymen, and by-and-by to their fellow men at large. This their special ministry was based on the teaching of Christ Himself. He did much more than teach: but He did teach incessantly, educating in particular His personal disciples. All the teaching and preaching of the apostles and evangelists were but the reproduction and echo of the teaching and preaching of the great Teacher and Preacher Himself. Their report to the people around was *through the word of Christ to themselves*. The knowledge which they had of the nature of the work of their Lord was almost all derived from what had fallen from His lips, and was either heard by them or reported to them. In the Received Text, that of Erasmus, the expression is not *through Christ's word*, but *through God's word*. The two readings almost reciprocally balance. The Old Latin Version has *Christ's word*; the Syriac Versions have *God's word*. The reading *Christ's* is on the whole the best supported. The Gothic, Sahidic, Coptic, Armenian Versions support it. It is the reading that was

least likely to have been obtruded in the margin, if *God's word* had been in the autograph.

Ver. 18. *But I say, Is it not the case that they did not hear? No, indeed. Into all the earth went out their sound, and to the ends of the world their words.*

The apostle anticipates for himself an objection that might be started to his teaching regarding the perilous position of his countrymen. Would they be culpable on account of their unbelief, if they had never heard the gospel-report? The apostle does not plunge into a discussion of the abstract principle. He had leaped into that whirlpool before, in chapter ix., and had come victoriously out. But the case he has now in hand did not require any such elaborate argumentation. For what is the matter of fact regarding this non-hearing? *It is not the case, is it, that they did not hear?*

Μενοῦνγε, “*No indeed*”; *it is far from being the case, that they did not hear.* The apostle, having thus strongly repelled the suggestion that perhaps his countrymen had not heard, clothes his conception of the facility of hearing in the garb of the psalmist's parallelistic language: *Into all the earth went forth their sound; and to the ends of the world their words.* (See Ps. xix. 4.) The pronoun, in the expression

*their words*, refers in particular to *the heavens* spoken of in verse 1. Compare the concluding clause of verse 4. All nature is vocal. "It has a language, but not one that can be classed with any of the dialects of earth" (Perowne). It is "in reason's ear" that the works of nature, or rather of nature's God, "utter forth a glorious voice" (Addison). The apostle means that Jews everywhere have been as assuredly within the radius of the gospel as men everywhere, with ears to hear, are within the reach of the voices of nature. It is at the same time to be borne in mind that in the chorus of nature's voices there are utterances not of wisdom only, and of power, but of benevolence likewise, and very "tender mercy." There is more than *tender mercy*. There are "*tender mercies*" over all our Father's works. In the adoption of the universal language of the psalmist, the apostle may by some be regarded as dealing in hyperbolical representation. But if hyperbole there be, it is a legitimate figure of speech, enlivening style, and imposing on none who are unsophisticated in natural taste. But, apart from the sphere of hyperbole, there can be no room for charging with exaggeration the assertion that in the ears of the Jews, as a community, there was heard, in synagogue, and home, and other places of stated and casual meeting, the *sound* or *clang* of the glorious gospel.



Ver. 19. *But I say, Is it not the case that Israel knew not? First Moses saith, I will incite you to jealousy of a people who are not a people; I will exasperate you with a people void of intelligence.*

The apostle repeats himself, with variations, in wave after wave of thought. *But I say, Is it not the case that Israel knew not?* No: that is not the case. It may indeed be the case that the masses of the people did not earnestly carry out to its legitimate consequences the knowledge which they possessed. That is likely enough. Indeed it is certain. But the fulness and the freeness of the gospel, to Gentiles as well as to Jews, were made known to them by the teaching of their prophets, and by the explicit words of their Scriptures. The words were "in their memories." And to that extent they had a lodgement "in the heart." They were "in their mouths," as they conversed one with another. How could it then be said that Israel was unaware that "*whosoever* believeth on the Lord the Christ would never be put to shame"? (Ver. 11.) Was it not clearly made known to them that the Lord is Lord of *all*, and that *whosoever* should "call upon His name would be saved"? Verily, "Israel did know," and they should all have fostered their knowledge so that it might grow, and bud, and blossom, and bring forth the fruit

of righteousness and true benevolence. The impartial and universal relationship of the gospel, as opposed to the idea of monopoly in behalf of the Jews, should have been treated by them all as a first principle, for assuredly it had been clearly revealed to them.

*First Moses saith.* In adducing documentary evidence in support of his allegation, he quotes *in the first* place from Moses, the father at once of their commonwealth and of their literature. The word *first* is relative to a quotation which is to follow *in the second place*. Priority in the order of adduction is naturally conceded to the words of the great lawgiver.

He said, in the name of his people's God, *I will incite you to jealousy by a people who are not a people, I will exasperate you with a people void of intelligence.* It is language of poetic rhythm, and steeped in an element of anthropopathy. God threatens to stir the spirit of jealousy in their heart; indirectly, no doubt, and intermediately. They had, on their part, provoked Him to indignation by reason of their infatuated preference for idol-gods. "They provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods; with abominations provoked they Him to anger." (Deut. xxxii. 16.) By a righteous application of the talionic law, they were now to reap the hurricane and the "whirlwind." Their special privileges had been forfeited, and were about to be withdrawn. Their

organisation as the peculiar people of God required to be broken up. The Gentiles would be elevated to the highest water-mark of Israel's level; and indeed, if they should be grateful and faithful, a much higher level would be reached. Thus would God move His Israelitish people to jealousy and provoke them to anger. They would be exasperated by being superseded. And their exasperation would be nursed within them, just as if they could have had a right to prerogatives when no ethical improvement was realised or attempted. These threatenings, contained in the hymn of Moses, are irrefragable evidence that "Israel knew." And Israel ought to have considered carefully, that the gospel is God's voice to Gentiles as well as to Jews. It proclaims blessings that are free to all. Its veriest threatenings are demonstrations of the universality of grace.

When God is anthropopathically represented as jealous in relation to idol-gods, the substrate of thought involves such ideas as these: (1) He longed for human love. (2) He Himself loved sincerely and devotedly. (3) His love was not reciprocated. It was allowed to lie, bleeding inwardly. (4) There was in His heart something akin to a sense of disappointment. He did not receive the treatment which He had a right to expect. (5) There was a feeling of moral indignation intermingling with His sorrow.

When, again, God is represented as inciting His Israelitish people to jealousy and indignation, we are conscious of instantly descending to an immeasurably lower level of conduct and character than what is brought into view in the indignation and jealousy of God Himself. The Israelites were actuated, not by an impartial feeling of benevolence, but by a grasping spirit of selfism and selfishness. Hence their jealousy in reference to the Gentiles, and their exasperated feeling in reference to those who worked for the weal of the Gentiles,—the apostle and his coadjutors. God's hand was operative in the superinduction of penalties, not in giving shape to the evil spirit that had been developed. The abused prerogatives were withdrawn. And, as a result of that withdrawal, there was jealousy and exasperation.

The expression, *not a people*, or more literally, *not a nation* or *no nation*, is not to be accounted for on the principle that the Gentiles referred to were destitute of true national organization or incorporation, so that they were only an immense mob, or a fortuitous concourse of impersonated atoms or individuals. The Septuagint translation, followed by the apostle, does scant justice to the original, in which a distinction is drawn between two distinct words, *עַם* and *גוֹי*. The distinction, though not rigid, needed not to be ignored. The Gentiles in their sum

total, were an immense 'עַם or ἔθνος, but no people (עַם-אֱלֹהִים) so far as God's peculiar heritage is concerned. Had the reference been, not to the mass of Gentile persons, but to a single individual, he might have been represented as "a nobody." In their sum total they were an "ethnic" people, devoid for long centuries of spiritual intelligence.

Ver. 20. *And, in the second place, Isaiah makes bold to say, I was found of them who sought Me not, I became manifest to them who asked not after Me.* The passage quoted is part of the first verse of chapter lxxv., and is regarded by the majority of modern German expositors and Jewish commentators as intentionally applicable, not to the Gentiles, but to the Jews. They demur to the relevancy of the apostle's quotation. But the last clause of the verse, the clause not adduced by the apostle, as not being required to authenticate the legitimacy of his reference, is decisive evidence that the prophet had the Gentiles in view. The clause runs thus: *I said, "Here am I," "Here am I," to a nation "not called by My name."* Most assuredly that nationality was not the Jews, but the Gentiles. For not the Gentiles, but the Jews, were called by the name of Jahveh or Jehovah. It was they who were known among men as the people whose God was Jahveh. Hence the

apostle was historically accurate in his application of the two preceding clauses to the Gentiles.

The prophet is regarded as speaking "boldly." His language was fitted to shock the prejudices of his countrymen as regards that very prerogative in reference to which they were most sensitive. Was not the true Jahveh their most peculiar and exclusive possession? And yet here is their own peerless prophet "boldly" asserting that God was the God of the Gentiles as indisputably as He was the God of the Jews. *I was found by them who sought Me not.* Jahveh sought them, and they said *Here are we.* They did not repel His advances. There is a transposition in the order of the clauses. *I became manifest to them who asked not for Me.* God revealed Himself to them, and they did not close their eyes and stop their ears. He made Himself accessible to those who wished to inquire reverently and be divinely guided. (See the peculiar Hebrew word גִּדְרָשָׁתִּי, bringing "oracle" into view.)

Ver. 21. *But as to Israel he saith, All the day long I stretched forth My hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

The word *gainsaying*, though an excellent rendering, is archaic. *Contradictory* is ambiguous. *Contradicting* is literal and good. Instead of *disobedient*, Tyndale and Coverdale, following the



Vulgate, have *that beleveth not*. So Bengel, *unbelieving*.

While, on the one hand, the Lord was found by them who sought Him not, and was made manifest to them who asked not for Him; on the other, He was rejected, as with scorn, by those to whom He stretched forth His hands. The hands were stretched forth invitingly, winningly, urgingly, imploringly. They had been thus stretched forth *all the day*; i.e. unintermittingly, unweariedly.

Alas! alas! No wonder that the tenderest heart, that ever throbbed within human bosom, should have burst forth wailingly into tears and pangs and such bitter utterances as these,—  
“*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*” (Luke xiii. 34, 35.)



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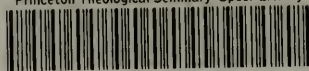
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